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SOLEMN PROSPECTS AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE NEW YEAR.

IT is a just though trite remark, that the world in which we live is never stationary. Itself, and all things in it, are suffering perpetual change. The effects produced in external nature, by the revolutions of day and night, and by the regular succession of seasons from year to year, are obvious, even to the most common observer; and have often furnished the subject of many a delightful song, to those who have viewed them with a poetic eye.

Though human society never becomes extinct, yet the individuals of which it is composed are continually changing. Every day that passes, removes many individuals from life; and the number must certainly be great, which each succeeding year consigns to their eternal home. Many, in every department of society, of every condition, of every age, and of every character, are cut down by the stroke of death; so that the places which they formerly occupied "know them now no more." Such changes have happened in all the years that are past, and similar events will undoubtedly occur, in those that are to come.

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Whilst multitudes of unthinking mortals spend their days and years in vanity, regarding, with a brutish insensibility, the most striking facts which the progress of time exhibits; let us be wise, and attend for a little to those *solemn prospects*, which the commencement of a new year opens to our view. Let us admit the possibility of dying in the course of it; and O that the writer, as well as every reader of this paper, might be enabled, through divine grace, suitably to improve the interesting prospect!

"This year thou shalt die," was the message of God by the mouth of Jeremiah, to the false prophet Hananiah: "This year thou shalt die," is the voice of God this day, to many who are putting far from them the thoughts of death, and exulting in the hope of many future years of prosperity and joy.

Ye men of rank and figure, this message is addressed to many of you; who, placed in the commanding stations of society, are raised to a proud pre-eminence above your fellow creatures. This day ye are receiving the adulation and homage of servile dependents and flatterers;

but before its anniversary return, your power and patronage shall have passed to other hands : The venal crowd shall have forsaken your threshold ; death shall have laid you low, and brought you to that house where the small and the great, the servant and the master, lie down undistinguished together ! Prepare to appear before the tribunal of that supreme Judge, "with whom there is no respect of persons, and who shall render to every man according to his works."

Ye high-minded possessors of the wealth of this world, who "trust in your wealth and boast yourselves of the multitude of your riches !" How many such are this day saying by their conduct, with the rich man in the parable, each to himself, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years ; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry !" but the day is coming forward, within this year, when God shall say to this or the other secure worldling, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." "Turn away thine eyes, then, from beholding vanity." Seek the true riches, the unfading inheritance ; seek them in the right order, and they are assuredly thine forever.

Ye who are devoted to sensual enjoyments ! "whose god is your belly ;" who are led captive by "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"—this year, Death, unwelcome messenger ! may snatch some of you away from the haunts of dissipation, from the assemblies of gaiety, or from the convivial board, where you labour, in noisy mirth, to drown the recollection of the past, and

the care of the future ; saying, with the disciples of Epicurus, "Let us eat and drink to-day, for to-morrow we die." Should the awful summons meet you in such circumstances, as these, with what consternation will your souls be overwhelmed ? Like the king of Babylon, when at his impious feast he beheld the hand-writing on the wall, "Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against the other."

Many poor afflicted ones, who have spent their days in obscurity, under the pressure of accumulated hardships, shall, indeed, this year, obtain a release from the troubles of a present life, and pass, according to their respective characters, to regions of perfect bliss, or of severer endless woe.

This year too, as in all those that have gone before, *Death shall approach his destined victims in various ways and forms.* Growing infirmities, slow wasting disease, or the multitude of years, shall prove to many the sure harbingers of mortality. Acute disease frequently makes the transition short, from the vigour of health to an untimely grave. Should war continue its ravages, how many lives, dragged forth by mad ambition, or engaged in the honourable defence of their country, may be expected to fall in deadly conflict ! Of those "who go down to the sea in ships," it may be feared, that not a few shall, in the raging deep, find a watery grave. Nor shall even the merciless element of fire, probably, want its

victims. Nay, some souls, it may be presumed, without the least previous warning, escaping almost the sensation of dying, may suddenly, in a moment, drop their mortal bodies, and launch into eternity, whilst engaged in their ordinary occupations or duties, in the market or in the field, in their own house, or in the house of God. Whatever the designs of Providence to such individuals may be, their example sounds aloud to survivors the momentous admonition, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

Youth and Beauty, whilst rejoicing in the days of youth, in the days of the gladness and gaiety of their heart, intent only on present joy, may receive the unwelcome call to go down to the dark and silent grave, and to appear before God in judgment.

The man of business, in the vigour of age, careful and cumbered about many things, unmindful that one thing is needful, anxious to advance his fortune, and lay up a provision for old age; who has no time to think of his soul, and to prepare for eternity; may yet, in the course of this year, find leisure to die, and give account of himself to God.

This year too, as in every former year, is there not reason to apprehend, that *Death, by unwelcome visits, may destroy, in many cases, the happiness of domestic society?* disjoining, by a heart-rending stroke, the strongest and most endearing ties by which human hearts can be united; snatching the smiling, prattling

child, from the embrace of the fond reluctant parent; cutting down by a stroke the more advanced offspring, the promised staff and solace of parental age; or, by taking away its natural head and protector, constraining the bereaved family to say, "We are orphans and fatherless; our mothers are as widows!" Such scenes as these exhibit, in the most affecting form, the vanity of human comforts, and strongly enforce the apostle's admonition, "But this I say, brethren, the time is short; it remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away."

Amidst all the vicissitudes of time, "the word of the Lord abideth forever." And the relation which individuals bear to the dispensation of mercy, discovers farther, and deeply interesting prospects, in consequence of the changes that may be expected, in the course of the year that is now begun.

"Do the prophets live forever?" The gospel of Christ is justly denominated, The Everlasting Gospel; but those, who preach it, "are not suffered to continue by reason of death." To many invested with the sacred office, the great Lord will ere long say, "Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward." To the unfaithful servant, how tremendous the summons! Blessed is that minister, who, having

studied through life to approve himself to God, and to commend himself to the consciences of men, is able, in such a prospect, to say with Paul, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought the good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness."

The gospel is appointed to be preached "to every creature," but *multitudes of wretched mortals refuse to hear it*. They make light of the gospel, and despise its ordinances; they forsake the Christian assemblies, and profane the day of God. Enslaved by vice, they are forced to take refuge in infidelity; and joining the tribe of scoffers, they mutually harden one another, and make strong the bands of wickedness. How many such shall, in the course of this year, be arrested in the career of impiety! Yes, proud and haughty scorner, know that the day is at hand, when thou shalt appear before the despised Saviour, provoked by thine impenitence and hardness of heart to act as the righteous Judge, and pronounce the irreversible sentence, "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me."

How difficult is it to convince many, who profess the gospel, of the reality of eternal things, and to engage their attention to the great concerns of salvation! Though their character be remote from infidelity or profligacy, they are strangers to the power of vital godliness. They hear the truths of the gospel,

and perhaps avow an approbation of them; but they perceive not their intrinsic glory, nor feel the importance of them to their own happiness. They pass their days in security, and expect that all shall be well with them at last. But "wo to them that are at ease in Zion!" To many of this description the last year of life is arrived. The day of salvation shall quickly go down; all opportunities of improvement shall soon be past; and to a long eternity they shall bewail their folly, because "the things that belong to their peace are hid from their eyes" forever.

It is the glory of the gospel, that it reveals a method of divine acceptance, at once honourable to God, and safe for sinful men; "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth." Much is it to be lamented, that many "being ignorant of the righteousness of God," or too proud to submit to it, "go about to establish their own righteousness." They expect eternal life as the reward of some good thing done by themselves: or, if they admit (as who can refuse to admit?) that they are chargeable with some imperfections, they will be indebted to Jesus for that portion of righteousness, which is necessary to supply their own deficiency; and are willing, at most, to divide with the Saviour of sinners the glory of their salvation. Thus they fatally stumble at that very stone which God has laid in Zion, as the only "sure foundation, and chief corner stone." No description of human characters is more inac-

cessible than this, to the truth and grace of the gospel. If to any such *self-righteous, self-deceiving* souls, this shall prove a dying year, they shall, alas ! too late discover, that they are indeed "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

How awful the thought, that amongst the professors of Christianity, *some assume that sacred name with no other view than to "make again of godliness!"* Tho' conscious of the insincerity of their hearts, they call Jesus, Lord, and join themselves to the number of his disciples, only that they may acquire reputation among men, or in some other way promote their worldly interest. But "let the sinners in Zion be afraid; let fearfulness surprise the hypocrites;" the year of vengeance may now be come. This year, O false professor, in some fatal hour, death may place thee before the Judge of all. Though thou shouldst succeed in deceiving thy fellow mortals to the end of life, "God will not be mocked." Thy secret hypocrisy shall at last be unveiled; "the hidden things of dishonesty shall be brought to light;" and "what is the hope of the hypocrite," or what hath he gained, "in the day that God taketh away his soul?"

How vast the number of individuals, belonging to these various classes of ungodly or unbelieving men, to whom the year which hath now commenced is pregnant with everlasting destruction !

But "though all men have not faith," yet *there are some who believe and obey the gospel.* Amidst all the degeneracy of the times, the Lord has still reserved a peo-

ple for himself, who know his name, and have tasted his love; who "live by the faith of the Son of God," and "walk in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of their life." To the friends of Jesus, the prospect of dying this year, ought to give no dismay. They have reason rather to expect it with joyful hope. Many "old disciples" shall this year arrive at their Father's house. Many who "groan being burdened in this earthly tabernacle," shall soon obtain the long desired release, and enter into rest. And, O thou afflicted soul, "tossed with tempest, and not comforted," by reason of perplexing doubts and fears, and the tedious painful conflict with temptation and sin, rejoice, and "lift up thy head, for the day of thy redemption" draweth nigh. Soon shall "the days of thy mourning be ended." "Thy warfare shall be accomplished," and thou thyself be "more than a conqueror through him that loved us." Are any cut down in the midst of their days, and in the midst of useful service to the church and to the world? Those who survive may have cause to regret the loss, but the servant of God is called to a more extensive sphere of service; to sublimer enjoyments; to a purer and nobler society above. In every possible case, "blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; they rest from their labours and their works do follow them." Happy art thou, O Christian, if the commencement of this year beholds thee "abounding in the work of the Lord," and "waiting for his salvation." But it shall indeed be the happiest of all the years thou hast ever seen,

of its conclusion find thee with Christ, and with God above, "serving him day and night in his temple."

Such are some of the prospects which this, the first day of the year, presents to our contemplation. Thousands, amongst whom there may be some who now read these lines, shall find them fully realized before its next return.

Reader, before the subject be

dismissed—perhaps forever! pause for a moment, and lift up thy soul to Heaven, and address to thyself this solemn inquiry, If I should die this year, where shall my eternal habitation be?

"O that they were wise; that they understood this; that they would consider their latter end."

"Lord, so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom."

Rel. Monitor.

Biography.

MEMOIRS OF PRESIDENT DAVIES.

(Concluded from page 256.)

THE eminence and lustre of Mr. Davies' character as a *President*, were generally confessed. In his mode of governing the college, the firmness of authority was tempered with benignity, mildness and condescension. He watched over his pupils with the tender solicitude of a father. He repressed their youthful irregularities by the gentlest methods possible; nor did he ever inflict punishment, without evident reluctance and pain. The consequence was, that he was equally revered and loved by every member of his literary family. They esteemed it not a confinement, but a privilege and happiness, to be under his care. They complied with his injunctions, and the general regulations of the seminary, less from fear, than from principle and inclination. In his method of instruction, there was something unusually

captivating and impressive. Conveying his ideas with the utmost facility, and, by the aid of a lively imagination, imparting the charms of novelty, even to common subjects, he could not fail to rivet the attention of his pupils. And generously communicative, as he was, of his ample intellectual treasures, he was scarcely less sure to enrich their minds. But while thus assiduous to promote the literary improvement of the youth committed to his charge, he was still more anxious and engaged to cultivate their *hearts*. He considered religion as unspeakably the best and brightest of all accomplishments; the only sure foundation, either of usefulness, honour or felicity. He therefore bent his principal attention, as every instructor should, to impress the youthful mind with the importance of this object. He seized with avidity every occasion to inculcate on his pupils, in private, the worth of their souls, and the pressing necessity of

their immediately securing the blessings of salvation. And his public discourses bear frequent witness how near their immortal interests were to his heart. Toward the close of a new year's sermon, he expresses himself in this tender, glowing language: "I beg leave of my promiscuous auditory, to employ a few minutes in addressing myself to my important family, whom my paternal affection would always single out from the rest, even when I am speaking in general terms to a mixed crowd. Therefore, my dear charge, my pupils, my children, and every tender and endearing name! Ye young immortals, ye embryo angels or infant fiends, ye blooming, lovely, fading flowers of human nature; the hope of your parents and friends, of church and state; the hope, joy and glory of your teachers! Hear one that loves you; one that has nothing to do in the world, but to promote your best interest; one that would account this the greatest blessing he could enjoy in his pilgrimage; and whose nights and days are sometimes made almost equally restless, by his affectionate anxieties for you: Hear him upon a subject in which you are most intimately interested; a subject the most important that even an apostle or an angel could address you upon, and that is, the right improvement of time, the present time, and preparation for eternity." He then proceeds to urge their immediate attention to religion, by the most cogent arguments, and in a manner peculiarly awakening and persuasive.

In another sermon, on this text; *And this is the condemna-*

tion, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil;—we find the following pungent address to his pupils: "There is not one in a thousand of the sons of men that enjoys your advantages. Light, human and divine, natural and supernatural, ancient and modern; that is, knowledge of every kind shines upon you, and you are every day basking under its rays. You have nothing to do but to polish your minds, and, as it were, render them luminous. But let me put you in mind, that unless you admit the light of the glorious gospel of Christ to shine in your hearts, you will still be the children of darkness, and confined in the blackness of darkness forever. This is intolerably shocking, even in supposition. Suppose any of you should be surrounded with more light than others, for no other purpose but that you may have a stronger conflict with conviction, and that your consciences may with greater force raise tumults and insurrections within you; suppose your sins should be the sins of men of learning and knowledge, the most daring and gigantic sins on this side hell; suppose you should turn out sinners of great parts, fine geniuses, like the fallen angels, those vast intellects; wise, but wicked; wise to do evil, but without knowledge to do good; suppose it should be your highest character that you can harangue well, that you know a few dead languages, that you have passed through a course of philosophy; but as to that knowledge which sanctifies all the rest, and renders them useful to yourselves or

others ; that knowledge which alone can make you wise to salvation, and guide you to avoid the paths of destruction, you shun it, you hate it, and choose to remain contentedly ignorant in this important respect ; suppose your parents, who have been at the expense of your education ; your friends, who have entertained such high and pleasing expectations concerning you ; church and state, that look to you for help, and depend upon you to fill stations of importance in the world ; and your careful instructors, who observe your growing improvements with proportional pleasure ; suppose that after all this generous labour, and all these pleasing prospects, they should see you at last doomed to everlasting darkness, for your voluntary abuse of the light you now enjoy ; suppose these things, and ——— but the consequences of these suppositions are so terrible, that I am not hardly enough to mention them. And, O ! shall they ever become matters of fact !

“ Therefore, my dear youth, admit the light, love it, and pursue it, though at first it should make such discoveries, as may be painful to you ; for the pain will prove medicinal. By discovering your danger in time, you may be able to escape it ; but never expect to remove it by the silly expedient of shutting your eyes. Be impartial inquirers after truth, as to yourselves, as well as other things, and no longer attempt to put a cheat upon yourselves. Alas ! how childish and foolish, as well as wicked and ruinous, would such an imposture be ! The gospel, in this particular, only requires you to

be honest men ; and surely this is a most moderate and reasonable demand. Therefore, be ye *children of the light and of the day*, and walk as such, and then it will be a blessing to the world, and to yourselves, that you ever were born.”

Instructions thus faithful, delivered with the greatest tenderness, and enforced by a life of ardent, uniform piety, could scarcely fail to make the most important and salutary impressions on the minds of his youthful charge.

The public and official appearances of President Davies were marked with dignity, decorum and elegance. His performances at anniversary commencements reflected equal honour on himself and the institution, and afforded the highest gratification to the crowded auditories, which those occasions brought together. But the work of the ministry was his chief delight. Here, emphatically, he was in his element. Here he was at home. He had, indeed, a lively and almost overwhelming sense of the magnitude of the sacred office, and of his own insufficiency for its discharge. This is strikingly apparent from some passages in a letter to his friend, Dr. Gibbons. “ It is an easy thing,” says he, “ to make a noise in the world, to flourish and harangue, to *dazzle the crowd*, and *set them all agape* ; but deeply to imbibe the spirit of Christianity ; to maintain a secret walk with God ; to be holy as he is holy ; *this is the labour, this is the work*. The difficulty of the ministerial work seems to grow upon my hands. Perhaps, once in three or four months, I preach in some measure as I could wish : that is, I

preach as in the sight of GOD, and as if I were to step from the pulpit to the supreme tribunal. I *feel* my subject. I melt into tears, or I shudder with horror, when I denounce the terrors of the Lord. I glow, I soar in sacred extacies, when the love of Jesus is my theme; and, as Mr. Baxter was wont to express it, in lines more striking to me, than all the fine poetry in the world,

"I preach as if I ne'er should preach again;
And as a dying man to dying men."

But alas! my spirits soon flag, my devotions languish, and my zeal cools. It is really an afflicting thought, that I serve so good a Master with so much inconstancy: but so it is, and my soul mourns upon that account."

The same humble and self-diffident spirit breathes in the following paragraph, which we find at the beginning of one of his discourses: "To preside in the solemnities of public worship, to direct your thoughts, and choose for you the subjects of your meditation in those sacred hours which you spend in the house of God, & upon the right improvement of which your everlasting happiness so much depends—this is a province of the most tremendous importance that can be devolved on a mortal: and every man of the sacred character, who knows what he is about, must tremble at the thought, and be often anxiously perplexed what subject he shall choose, what he shall say upon it, and in what manner he shall deliver his message. His success in a great measure depends upon his choice; for though the blessed Spirit is the proper agent, and

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though the best means, without his efficacious concurrence, are altogether fruitless, yet he is wont to bless those means that are best adapted to do good. After a long course of languid and fruitless efforts, which seem to have been unusually disowned by my divine Master, what text shall I choose out of the inexhaustible treasure of God's word? In what new method shall I speak upon it? What new, untried experiments shall I make? Blessed Jesus! my heavenly Master! direct thy poor perplexed servant, who is at a loss, and knows not what to do: direct him that has tried, and tried again, all the expedients he could think of, but almost in vain, and now scarcely knows what it is to hope for success."

Respecting Mr. Davies' appearance in the pulpit, an eminent minister,* who intimately knew him, has given the following testimony: "His manner of delivery, as to pronounciation, gesture, and modulation of voice, seemed to be a perfect model of the most moving and striking oratory. Whenever he ascended the sacred desk, he seemed to have not only the attention, but all the various passions of his auditory, entirely at his command. And as his personal appearance was august and venerable, yet benevolent and mild, so he could speak with the most commanding authority, or melting tenderness, according to the variation of his subject. With what majesty and grandeur, with what energy and striking solemnity, with what powerful and almost irresistible eloquence would he illus-

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* Rev. Mr. Bostwick, of New-York.

trate the truths, and inculcate the duties of Christianity! Mount Sinai seemed to thunder from his lips, when he denounced the tremendous curses of the law, and sounded the dreadful alarm to guilty, secure, impenitent sinners. The solemn scenes of the last judgment seemed to rise in view, when he arraigned, tried, and convicted self-deceivers and formal hypocrites. And how did the balm of Gilead distil from his lips, when he exhibited a bleeding, dying Saviour to sinful mortals, as a sovereign remedy for the wounded heart, and anguished conscience! In a word, whatever subject he undertook, persuasive eloquence dwelt upon his tongue; and his audience was all attention. He spoke as on the borders of eternity, and as viewing the glories and terrors of the unseen world; and conveyed the most grand and affecting ideas of these important realities."

Though to some, this description may seem like the partial, undistinguishing panegyric of a friend, there is much reason to rely on its truth and accuracy. There are those still living, who repeatedly heard Mr. Davies preach, and who speak of his public performances as combining a solemnity, a pathos and animation truly wonderful, such as seemed directly to result from a lively sense of a present Deity, together with a most tender, fervent benevolence to the souls of men. The effects were in some measure answerable. It is said, that he seldom preached, without producing some visible emotions in great numbers present; and seldom, without some saving impressions being left on one or

more of his auditory. That this should have been the case, will not probably appear surprising to those who attentively peruse the volumes of his printed discourses, and reflect that the selection was made, after his death, from such as he ordinarily preached. The world is in possession of a great variety of excellent and invaluable sermons. Yet, if aptitude to accomplish the great ends for which sermons are needed, be considered as the standard of merit, few extant are superior to those of President Davies.

Their chief and prominent excellence is doubtless this: that they abound in clear, forcible and affecting delineations of the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel. The utter depravity and impotence of man; the sovereignly free grace of Jehovah; the divinity of Christ; the atonement in his blood; justification through his righteousness; regeneration and sanctification by the Holy Spirit; these were his favourite themes. On these he never ceased to insist and expatiate. He viewed these doctrines as constituting the essence of the Christian scheme; the grand support of vital and practical religion. He considered their intelligent and cordial reception as of the highest importance; and viewed every attempt to subvert and explain them away, as equally hostile to the truth of God, and the best interests of men. On these points, he was uniformly explicit, decided, and strenuous.

Still he defended the truth, and even repelled those errors, which he viewed most dangerous, in the spirit of love and meekness. None could be more

distant from pressing unhallowed human passion into the service of God. In his sermons, we find none of those asperities by which religion has too often been dishonoured. Truth appears in an attitude and aspect, not only majestic, but graceful and attractive.

Even in his most pungent and awakening addresses to the unconverted, the spirit of benevolence and compassion is obviously predominant. Perhaps there are no sermons, which depict, in more striking and awful colours, the guilt, the wretchedness and danger of the impenitent. Yet, who does not see, that a tender, trembling concern for their best interests prompts and pervades the whole? And where is the sinner, who can refrain from taking the preacher's part against himself?

These sermons contain frequent descriptions of the nature and evidences of real religion. They exhibit it as commencing in repentance and faith, as continued by a course of mortification and self-denial, and as manifesting itself by substantial fruits of holiness and virtue. So luminous and striking are these delineations, and so accurately do they distinguish genuine religion, both from its opposites and counterfeits, that it seems scarcely possible that any one should attentively peruse them, and yet remain ignorant of his real state. His discourses upon the *poor and contrite in spirit*,

upon the *bruised reed*, and upon the *spiritually whole and sick*, abound with discriminating remarks on character, and with consolations for the weakest, the most dejected and trembling believer.

It is no small recommendation of the sermons of Mr. Davies, that, while intelligible to the meanest capacities, they are calculated to gratify persons of the greatest knowledge and refinement. They abound with striking thoughts, with the beauties and elegancies of expression, and with the richest imagery. Some fastidious critics may perhaps object to his style, as florid and ornamented in the extreme. But it should be remembered that nature made him a poet; and that a brilliant imagination, operating on a warm heart, familiarized him to forms of expression, which, in others, might seem unnatural and affected. On the whole, it may be properly remarked, that his style, though rich and entertaining, is rather a dangerous model for imitation. Young preachers, by following it too closely, might be betrayed into a manner ill suited to their genius. Let them study to resemble President Davies in his piety, his zeal, his fidelity in exploring and communicating truth; but let them not be too emulous of soaring upon the wing of his vigorous and excursive imagination.

Z.

Religious Communications.

ON THE IMPRECATIONS IN THE SCRIPTURES.

WHEN a passage, in the original language of the Scripture, may be fairly translated two ways, it will hardly be denied, that we ought to adopt that translation, which is attended with fewest difficulties.

The writer of these remarks pretends to no critical knowledge of the Hebrew language, but believes it to be generally conceded, as it is by bishop Horne and Mr. Scott, that those passages in Psalms, 69, 109, and 137, which are rendered, by our translators, as imprecations of temporal and spiritual judgments, on the writer's enemies, are capable of being translated, as if they were a prediction.

The latter supposition is attended with no very important difficulties. The greatest difficulty, which presents itself, is, that the psalmist should be supposed certainly to know the destiny of his enemies. Once suppose him possessed of this knowledge, and it is easy enough to conceive that he should communicate it to others.

The difficulties attending the opinion, that the psalmist prayed for various temporal disasters to descend on his enemies and their connexions in this world, and for their everlasting damnation, in the world to come, are neither few nor trifling.

1. To pray for the destruction of enemies appears not to savour of an evangelical temper. The apostle's direction is, *Bless, and curse not.* A greater than the

apostle hath said, *Bless them that curse you.*

2. To imprecate wrath against enemies does not appear to coincide with other parts of David's conduct. In Psal. xxxv. 12, &c. the psalmist is represented as being very deeply afflicted, when his enemies were in distress. Christ, on the cross, prayed, not that his enemies might be destroyed, but forgiven. Stephen, in the agonies of death, preferred a similar request.

The language of imprecation and cursing does not seem to have been common to saints. Jeremiah did, indeed, use it in the 20th chapter of his prophecy. His words, at that time, as well as those of Moses on a particular occasion, give humiliating proof of the power of corruption, even in God's children. They are not to be imitated.

But you imagine, perhaps, that *benevolence* may lead a man to imprecate present and eternal misery on his enemies, on supposition that his enemies are the enemies of God.

The crucifiers of Christ were enemies to God by wicked works; so were the murderers of Stephen, yet both were the objects of intercession, and not of imprecation. Those enemies of David, for whom great tenderness is expressed in the 35th psalm, must have been of a similar character to those others, of whom he speaks in psalm 109. Nay, there is an important sense in which all unrenewed persons

are enemies to God. Are we, on that account, to pray for their eternal undoing?

But David's enemies deserved destruction. Ah, doubtless they did. So does the writer of these remarks, and so do all his fellow sinners. Still he hopes, that none, through benevolence, desire either his, or their reprobation.

But you proceed farther, and say, the enemies of David were incorrigible. Who knows this? David himself could not know it, saving from special revelation; and if such revelation were made to him, it removes the most important objection against the opinion of *Bishop Horne* and *Mr. Scott*, who believe that the psalmist did not imprecate, but only foretel. If their destiny were revealed to him, it is not very surprising, that he should communicate a knowledge of it to others.

That the Scriptures do not commend impatience towards the wicked, is very certain. God endures sinners with much long suffering, and encourages his children to do the like. Many persons, after enormous profligacy, have yet been the monuments of grace. It would, indeed, be an extraordinary occurrence in the Christian world, should any humble saint, under a sense of his own unworthiness and the divine forbearance towards himself, adopt the following language in relation to others, "I have frequently prayed that they might repent and obtain salvation; but as they still remain impenitent, and deserve wrath, I now pray, in opposition to my former requests, that they may not repent, but be damned forever." Were such a prayer

offered, would not the Lord answer, *Oughtest thou not to have compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I have had pity on thee?* Doubtless the saints will acknowledge the justice and holiness of God in his treatment of reprobates. They now acknowledge his holiness in sending dearths, earthquakes, tornadoes, and the pestilence, but they do not pray for these judgments. Who would not be surprised, should a pious believer, when employed in domestic worship, be heard to pray against his wicked neighbours, that the Almighty would strike their houses with lightning; send sickness and want into their families; bring them all to an untimely grave, and to the place appointed for the devil and his angels?

But it is said there are passages of Scripture, even in the New Testament, which would justify such an intercession. Christ said to the Scribes and Pharisees, *Fill up the measure of your fathers.*

Is this a prayer? If it be, to whom is it directed? It is spoken ironically; and no more proves, that our blessed Lord, who, in the last hours of his life, prayed for his murderers, did previously pray against them, than the words of Solomon, *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, &c.* evince, in him, a design to promote rudeness and debauchery.

To elucidate difficult passages of sacred writ, by those which are plain, is safe and prudent; but to explain one obscure passage, by others equally obscure, is by no means satisfactory.

The 2d epistle to Timothy does, indeed, contain these words, *Alexander, the coppersmith, did*

me much evil. The Lord reward him according to his works. Is it so very certain, that St. Paul did, in these words, pray, that this mechanic might experience the eternal wrath of God, that this text will prove David to have imprecated such misery on his enemies? In the verse next but one succeeding, the apostle informs Timothy, that, in his first defence, all men forsook him; but subjoins, *I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.* Did the apostle pray for the salvation of those, who forsook him, and against the salvation of him who withstood him? His own virulence against the gospel was once, it is probable, as great as Alexander's; yet he obtained mercy; and he was divinely taught to give this direction, *In meekness instruct them who oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.*

The seeming imprecation on Alexander is thus paraphrased by Dr. Doddridge: "I doubt not, but the Lord, who exercises a guardian care over me as his faithful servant, will, sooner or later, reward him according to his works. May it be an instructive and merciful discipline to reform rather than destroy him."

"All the ancients note," says a learned commentator, "that this is not an imprecation, but a prediction becoming an apostle. Pseudo Justin, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Œcumenius, Theophylact."

Good people, it is thought, would find more pleasure and edification in reading such passages with a well grounded belief that they are predictions, than if they considered them as impre-

cations. If, therefore, they will, as the learned observe, bear such an interpretation, it can scarcely be a desirable object that they should not. But if they be, in fact, imprecations, there is doubtless something relating to the case, which we do not understand. LEIGHTON.

THE PIETY OF ANCIENT PAGANS.

It is an opinion of many eminent authors, that there is no nation or race of men so barbarous and brutish, as to be utterly destitute of all notions or impressions respecting a supreme Being. The accounts given of the natives of New Holland, seem to contradict this opinion; for so far, as the English residents in that country can discover, the rude aborigines of that sequestered continent manifest no ideas of a God. Without attempting to prove or disprove the justness of an opinion, the precise theoretical correctness of which it may not be easy to settle, I would observe, that most savage nations have entertained some imperfect conceptions of a supreme being or beings, who created the world, and continue to exercise some influence over men and physical events. Indeed it is hard to believe that beings, endowed with intellectual powers, however feeble and uncultivated, should see themselves, and every thing about them, under the constant control of causes beyond their reach, without a strong impression, that there must be a supreme, intelligent, and all-powerful Agent, to which the visible operations of nature must be ascribed.

So much is certain, that most of the nations, of whom history has preserved any correct accounts, have believed in and worshipped some kind of gods, as the authors of creation and the dispensers of good and evil. Imperfect as have been the ideas of the pagan world, concerning the being and attributes of God, most men have been so conscious of their own frailty, imbecility, and exposure to evils, which they could neither foresee nor resist, as to acknowledge their dependence on some superior being. Hence has originated, among most pagan nations, that fear and reverence of the supposed superior or supreme agent, which is denominated *piety*. Of the practice of piety among the ancient pagans, many illustrious examples are recorded, which, for sincerity, and the spirit of humility and submission to a superior power, which appear to have accompanied them, would do honour to a real Christian. Thus Herodotus relates that, when the Persians and Greeks were arranged for battle at Platea, both armies offered sacrifices to the gods; and in the midst of the battle, Pausanias, General of the Spartans, looking earnestly towards the temple of Juno, implored the interposition of the goddess.

In the retreat of the ten thousand Greeks under Xenophon, sacrifices were offered to the gods, to procure their favour; and when the troops had arrived at Trebisonde, on the Euxine, which was considered as an effectual escape from the dangers of the march, sacrifices were offered to Jupiter, the preserver,

and to other gods, in fulfilment of their vows.

In the Institution of Cyrus we see the sentiments of Xenophon in regard to the worship of a supreme power. He represents Cyrus, as declaring that he never undertook any enterprise, great or small, without performing his duties to the gods. In addition to many instances mentioned, I cannot refrain from citing the passage, in which an entertainment was concluded by an address to the gods—*εὐχαριστοὶ τοῖς θεοῖς τὰ ἀγαθὰ*—praying for prosperity; an evidence that Xenophon at least believed in the propriety of giving thanks and asking a blessing at table.

It was piety, which led the ancients to the practice of vows; or promises to perform certain acts to the gods, in case of success in enterprises, or deliverance from danger. These vows were held sacred, like oaths. Before the battle of Marathon the Athenians vowed to immolate to Diana as many goats, as they should find Persians dead on the field of battle.

Extraordinary assemblies of the Athenians, holden in times of imminent danger, were introduced with religious ceremonies. The place was lustrated with the blood of victims; a herald repeated a formulary of vows and prayers, addressed to the gods for the safety of the state. The Amphictyonic council also was opened by sacrifices, offered for the public tranquillity; and Lycurgus commenced the work of reforming the laws of Sparta by consulting the oracle of Delphi.

The Romans, like the Greeks, revered the gods, and paid

most sacred regard to the obligations of an oath. In times of public calamity the senate directed extraordinary ceremonies to be performed, to manifest their dependence on the superior powers, to appease the wrath of the gods, and implore their aid and protection.

In the year of Rome 356, a winter of unusual severity, followed by a mortal pestilence, induced the Senate to decree that the Sybilline books should be consulted, and unusual ceremonies of religion should be performed.

The Dictator C. Cassus, in the year 370, encamped before his enemies, and before commencing an attack, took the auspices, sacrificing a victim, and imploring the favour of the gods.

Fabius, before he marched to oppose Hannibal, offered sacrifices to the gods; and before the eventful battle at Cannæ, every mouth was repeating the oracles of the sacred books; and vows, and prayers, and supplicatory offerings occupied the city of Rome.

In pursuance of this spirit of piety, public thanks were given for remarkable deliverances from danger. The victories over the Samnites, in 459, were followed by a thanksgiving of four days' continuance—*quatri-
dui supplicatione publicum gau-
dium privatis studiis celebratum
est.*

From the same principle of reverence for the gods, sprung the sacred regard, which the Romans maintained for an oath; an effect, which extended its salutary influence to innumerable civil and military duties. Indeed, if we credit the concurring

testimonies of historians, the Romans, in fidelity to their engagements, have never been surpassed by any Christian people. This is a remarkable fact, and one that should put modern Christians to shame, that the fear of pagan gods produced such important effects on the moral habits of a nation, when this effect is contrasted with the disregard to oaths and promises, frequently observed in Christian countries. In general, however, the morals of the most refined nations of antiquity were licentious, and their manners coarse, beyond what is observable in most Christian nations. As they emerged slowly from barbarism, many of the rude customs, indecent and inhuman practices of that state, were too firmly incorporated into their habits, to be eradicated by any thing short of a heavenly teacher and divine commands. There are some illustrious exceptions to this general character of the ancients. "Religion," says Epictetus, "requires us to entertain correct opinions concerning the immortal gods; to believe that they exist, and that they govern the world in the best manner, and with rectitude; that we should, in all things, yield them our obedience, and acquiesce in their dispensations, as proceeding from a mind of supreme perfection. We ought to perform sacrifices and offer libations to the gods, with first fruits, according to the custom of our country, with pure minds and sincere zeal, not with sordid parsimony, nor yet with useless profusion, above our means."

"Our oaths," says Xenophon, "to which we have called the

gods to witness, forbid us to be enemies; and that person, who is conscious to himself of having neglected them, in my opinion can never be happy; for whoever becomes the object of divine wrath, I know no swiftness can save him, no darkness hide him, no strong place defend him, since in all places, all things are subject to their power; every where they are equally lords of all. This is my opinion concerning both our oaths, and the gods, whom we have made the depositories of our friendship."

It would fill a volume to cite the proofs of this reverence for superior beings, among the ancient Pagans. Suffice it to say, that all historical records abound with examples. And it is particularly observable, that the historians constantly ascribe public calamities to the anger of the gods. Earthquakes, plagues, great disasters of every kind are represented, as the just punishment of men for their wickedness and impiety; and sacrifices to appease the gods and avert their vengeance seem to have been coeval with the human race.

"The gods (the only great and only wise)
Are mov'd by offerings, vows, and sacrifice;
Offending man their high compassion wins,
And daily prayers atone for daily sins."

We see therefore sentiments of piety have been common to the pagan, as well as Christian world; but for want of just ideas of the true God, and his will, this reverence of the pagan nations was ill-directed, and often marked by the wildest absurdities. The Christian alone is blessed

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with a revelation of the divine character, the only object of true piety and devotion. A.

SURVEY OF NEW-ENGLAND CHURCHES.

(Continued from page 274.)

ONE cannot have lived long in New-England under advantages to obtain information, without observing that a *growing contempt of creeds and confessions of faith* is characteristic of the present times.* They are abundantly decried, as useless inventions, having no tendency to promote the interests of truth and religion. They are represented, as fruitful sources of debate and contention. They are exclaimed against, as inconsistent with the natural liberty of mankind, and the sacred freedom of Christianity. They are stigmatized, as arbitrary impositions, engines of spiritual tyranny. In short, they are loaded with all the reproaches, which distinguished wit and learning can furnish. In consequence of this, they are generally undervalued, and, in many of our churches, are falling into disuse.

As this is deemed a great evil, and as there is, in these hazardous times, peculiar danger of its gaining ground and increasing its baneful influence; we judge

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* For the substance of what is to be exhibited on *confessions of faith*, Pastor acknowledges himself indebted to a large preface to the Assembly's confession of faith, written by W. Dunlop, Regius Professor of Divinity and Ecclesiastical History in the University of Edinburgh.

it necessary, as far as possible, to furnish a seasonable antidote. Accordingly, this will be the subject of the present and some following numbers of the survey. We shall endeavour to remove the contempt which is cast on creeds and confessions of faith, by a brief statement of their design and advantages, and to invalidate the objections raised against them by fair and rational answers. This discussion, it is hoped, will lead the churches of New-England to consider the great evil of contemning and disusing confessions of faith.

One use of confessions is, *to give to the world a fair and authentic account of the doctrines maintained by the Christian church.* Mankind have frequently, if not generally, mistaken, and misrepresented the faith of the church, and loaded Christianity with groundless calumnies. The religion of the gospel, in its tender years, was peculiarly exposed to abuse. Its Author, while he lived, was persecuted by the fury and barbarity of his enemies. After his decease, they endeavoured to blacken his memory and his doctrine by the vilest aspersions. His religion was disguised with a false face, and rendered unamiable and monstrous by reproach. And the world were likely to form their opinion of it, not from a careful examination of its nature, but from the misrepresentations of its adversaries. In such circumstances, how evidently necessary was it for the honour of religion, that Christians should give a fair representation of the doctrines which they believed.

This has been the more necessary from age to age, because

men, who have scarcely retained one principle of religion, and have embraced the most absurd and impious doctrines, have usurped the honourable name of Christians; in consequence of which the multitude, confounding all together, who bear the same title, have entertained views exceedingly injurious to the Christian cause. They have attributed to the real disciples of Jesus, the errors and immoralities of those, who have been disciples in name only. It has, therefore, been of the last importance, that true believers, by publishing summaries of the Christian faith, should distinguish themselves from every erroneous sect, and furnish the world with advantages to form some proper notions of their religion.

This necessity existed in a high degree at the *reformation*. The papists, inspired with irreconcilable enmity against the glory of Messiah's kingdom, used every engine in their power to obscure the light of divine truth, then breaking forth, and to stop the progress of the reformation. They defamed the characters of the reformers, and violently traduced their doctrines. Accordingly, it was one great end of the confessions of faith which they composed, to shew the falsity of the charges published against them, and to convince princes, and emperors, and the world, of the unreasonableness of their persecutors.

The same reason had influence with the assembly of divines, who composed the Westminster confession and catechisms. And the same reason justifies Christians at this day in the use of confessions. Never

was a day, when a greater variety of false doctrines were propagated, and when error had more talents and zeal engaged in its cause. Nor was there ever a time, when the sentiments of believers were more openly calumniated, or when the church of Christ was more disturbed and disgraced by the multitude of false brethren. It is, therefore, highly important, that the faithful servants of Christ should exhibit a plain, and somewhat full account of their religious principles. Not willing to be confounded with all who bear the Christian name, they crave this justice, that the world would judge of them by the creed which they embrace, and the conduct which they practically approve. From every mistaken and slanderous representation, they make their appeal to those authentic vouchers of their sentiments, which are found in their confessions of faith.

Now if, according to the spirit of modern catholicism, confessions of faith should be wholly laid aside, the world would be deprived of one important advantage for distinguishing the friends of Christ from others, and so be in greater danger of forming confused and unjust conceptions of Christianity. In such a state of things, the faith of Christ's people must be judged by the opinions which commonly prevail. They would want the best advantage to clear their principles from perverse reproaches, and to designate themselves, as the faithful advocates of gospel truth. This effect of setting aside confessions would gratify the enemies of the gospel, and give them power to use

every hostile weapon with greater success.

Secondly. By publishing plain and solemn declarations of their faith, believers design to show that they own the doctrines of Christ with cheerfulness and zeal; that his religion, though hated and despised by the impious, is the object of their veneration; that they glory in the gospel, as their most valuable possession, and feel grateful to God for such an unspeakable gift.

When God bestows distinguishing gifts, his people should not bury them in ungrateful silence, but seize every opportunity to make them known to the world, and to testify their gratitude to the bountiful Giver. Now in what way can God bless a people more than by causing the pure light of truth to shine upon them? The gospel is the noblest privilege, the most precious gift. Christians should acknowledge it with the sincerest praise, and embrace every opportunity to testify their esteem for its heavenly doctrines. This is done by the practice here recommended. Every time the faithful churches of Christ publish their confessions, they own their obligations to the infinite goodness of God for the gospel, proclaim their adherence to the divine truths contained in it, and glory in them as their crown.

As it is the duty of Christians, upon all proper occasions, to acknowledge with confidence the truths of the gospel, and never to be ashamed to profess them before men; so there are some seasons which afford peculiar motives to this duty. For example, if any of the doctrines of our holy religion should be in-

jured by clamorous reproaches, and exposed to contempt ; if the ordinances of God are regarded with disdain and represented as insignificant by the rich and the learned ; in such a case, for churches, that have preserved their integrity, to be ashamed of Christ's cause, to conceal his doctrines, and retire into a corner, would be inglorious and base. In such a time, God expects that his people will openly avow contemned truth, and espouse its interests the more earnestly, because it is misrepresented and vilified by others.

Unhappily this is the case at the present day. Numberless heresies have crept into the church, and the minds of men are enchanted with the enticing forms of error. With a great part insolent reproach and cunning sophistry triumph over the interests of truth. Some of the most important doctrines of Christianity, which were reputed of the highest value at the reformation, and were received with the warmest affection by the primitive worthies of New-England, are not only disbelieved, but branded with the most odious epithets, as the offspring of narrow, gloomy bigotry, and even abhorred, as blasphemous. This is particularly the case with the doctrines of man's native depravity, the deity and atonement of Christ, God's eternal decrees and electing love, his absolute dominion over all creatures, and his distinguishing, sovereign grace toward his people.

In such circumstances, we ought to stand forth, as faithful witnesses for the truth, to assert with boldness the principles of Christianity in their full extent,

and to glory in them as our highest honour. Let us account it our privilege to retain the faith of the reformation, particularly *that doctrine of grace*, which attributes every step in the salvation of sinners to God, and no part of it to man. True wisdom will teach us to undervalue the calumny of proud adversaries. Christian fortitude will never be moved from the foundation of truth by ridicule and slander. Contempt and reproach, in such a cause, we may gladly bind upon our head, as a crown of glory. And if, in many churches of which we hoped better things, divine truth has lost much of its purity and lustre ; we should reckon it the more indispensable duty, openly to maintain evangelical principles, and the more distinguished honour and happiness, to be free from the infection of error.

Thirdly. *By confessions of faith the churches may contribute much to mutual comfort and edification, and promote brotherly love and unity.*

They, who are animated by fervent zeal for religion, feel sensible pleasure when it flourishes in the world, especially when it maintains its ground in the midst of vigilant and powerful enemies. The faithful subjects of Messiah love him with the warmest affection. The glory of his empire is the dearest object of their desires. The more that empire flourishes and the more his throne is exalted, the greater joy flows into their hearts. Every victory of truth over error, and of grace over sin, yields them exquisite delight. When, therefore, churches, which embrace the same Christian doc-

trines, publish authentic declarations of their faith, they give pious satisfaction to each other. They afford the whole body of believers that pleasure, which those, who are inspired with the highest esteem for the truth, must receive from its establishment and propagation in the world. Every view which a saint has of a church, or a person maintaining the same faith with himself, especially when it is abandoned by others around him, enlivens his feelings and comforts his heart.

The only reason why men do not see and feel, how excellent is this end of confessions, is because they have not an affectionate regard for religion, and do not make Jerusalem their chief joy. The bulk of professors, lukewarm and degenerate, prefer their own interests before the interests of Christ, and so are little affected with the boldness of his enemies, the wounding of his cause, or the triumph of his grace.

All the real churches of Christ scattered over the earth, by whatever peculiarities they may be distinguished from each other, compose only one society, are animated by one Spirit, governed by the same maxims, invigorated by strength derived from the same source, and are all members of that body, of which Christ is the head. Thus all the subjects of Christ's kingdom are joined together by the strictest bonds, and are laid under inviolable obligations to the most intimate friendship, the most ardent love. They should persevere in uninterrupted harmony, and keep up that holy fellowship with each other, which they all

enjoy with the Father and with the Son.

One means, by which the different parts of Christ's church are to maintain a good correspondence and happy communion, is *the sameness of their faith*, or their agreement in the same gospel doctrines. The apostle mentions faith, as one thing which constitutes unity among Christians. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." It is easy to perceive that creeds are well adapted to promote among the churches the happy communion here recommended. By publishing their confessions, they express Christian affection and fellowship towards all in every place, who receive *the same common faith*.

It can, indeed, be hardly expected, that sincere Christians, while inhabitants of these cloudy regions, will perfectly agree in their religious opinions. This happiness is reserved for that world, where *God himself is the Sun*. But it is a most melancholy consideration, that Christians are more divided in their affections, than they are in their sentiments. Love is the peculiar character of our religion. And it is one of its precepts, that *whereunto we have already attained, we should all walk by the same rule and mind the same things*. Now there are few means better calculated to promote mutual love and fellowship, than a right use of confessions. This would directly distinguish between those who are infected by prevailing error, and those who hold the uncorrupted faith of the gospel; and, at the same time, would make it evident, that all the true servants of Christ harmonize not only in

those principles which constitute the basis of Christianity, but in every sentiment of special importance ; and that they are one in the temper of their minds, all actuated by the same motives, all serving the same divine Lord, pursuing the same object, and partaking the same pleasure. How would the discovery of this agreement stifle every unfriendly passion and banish alienation. How would Christians be ashamed of their uncharitableness toward those, who adore and serve the same Lord, and trust in the same atonement. How would they blush at their treatment of those, who hold in substance the same faith, and are cordially united to the same cause.

While a proper use of confessions would be likely to *preserve the purity of Christian doctrine from the contagion of error, and to secure the ministry and the church from those who deny the faith* ; it would be a very powerful means of bringing all good men to embrace each other with the warmest affection, and either

to lay aside their controversies, or to manage them with moderation and charity. The little distinctions, which would remain among them, would not confine the noble freedom of their love. Narrow party spirit would expire ; while the discussion of points on which they differed, being conducted with good temper and with prayer, would undoubtedly introduce an increasing uniformity. The warmth and zeal, so hurtfully directed against fellow Christians, would be employed in a joint and vigorous opposition against their common enemy. Their union would inconceivably augment their strength, and render every measure for Zion's good vastly more effective. Thus Christian virtue and piety would be strongly recommended to the esteem of mankind, and the church, all its divisions, its weakness, and deformity forgotten, would *look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.*

PASTOR.

Miscellaneous.

For the Panoplist.

ON THE EXECUTION OF LAWS.

AMONG the many rules proposed for deriving the greatest benefit from laws, this is one of the most important ; *that they be promptly and speedily enforced.* Though they combine in them the two essential qualities of strength and impartiality ; tho' they are plainly and invariably directed to the public good ;

though they are enacted with consummate wisdom, and sanctioned by the authority of a thousand Solons ; yet if the execution of them is attended with delay and indecision, they will necessarily be inefficacious.

Present punishment is a much more powerful preventive of crimes, than future punishment. When present evil engages our attention, and threatens our happiness, it appears highly alarm-

ing, and how to avoid it is the object of our immediate and anxious inquiry ; but, if removed to a moderate distance, it loses its formidable aspect, and dwindles into comparative insignificance. This wild judgment with respect to present and future objects encourages all the vices that deform the human character. It is this which makes the sluggard prefer poverty and contempt, to wealth and respectability ; which persuades the drunkard to indulge in excess with the certainty of losing health and reputation, and of becoming the object of universal disgust and abhorrence ; which induces the voluptuary to plunge others with himself into the depths of infamy and sin ; and which leads millions of moral beings to postpone the concerns of eternity for the enjoyments of the hour. What we apprehend to be near, is magnified by all the powers of the imagination ; while we force ourselves to believe remote objects enveloped in clouds of uncertainty. But as a portrait is useless, when the living person is present to our view ; so I need not attempt to describe that which is felt by every mind, and which it requires all the power of religion to overcome. Of this propensity the magistrate may the more profitably take advantage, as it is peculiarly strong in those who most frequently expose themselves to the penalty of law ; men unaccustomed to reflect, and prone to seize on temptation, equally regardless of the crime, and its distant consequences. A light punishment, therefore, which follows an offence without delay, strikes greater terror, than one immensely more

severe, if it is to be inflicted at some future period. Thus by a prompt administration of justice, the good of the community is promoted with the good of the offender ; a happy concurrence, which the wise and benevolent legislator will always strive to obtain.

When punishment accompanies transgression, and the connexion between them appears inseparable, the penalty is considered as more just, both by the sufferer, and the public. If the people once form an opinion that the laws are too rigorous, all the good to be expected from them is entirely prevented. Pity is necessarily excited for the transgressor ; and where this passion prevails, justice will not long maintain its authority. The offender, who has been soothed by the voice of compassion, feels half recompensed for his sufferings, and quite justified in the conduct, which brought them upon him. But if he is led from the very act to the place of punishment, all will see the wisdom of the law, which condemns him, and popular compassion will not operate to disarm justice of its terrors. For a short time after an offence is committed, all transgressors, but the most abandoned, feel a compunction for their violation of the laws. This time should be seized as the moment for the infliction of punishment to the best advantage. But if the decisions of conscience are suffered to be neglected and forgotten before those of law are denounced, punishment will answer no purpose to the sufferer, but to make him the more incorrigible.

Another fundamental requisite to the happy regulation of a

community, is, that the execution of the laws be rigorously exact. It would be hardly necessary to touch upon this part of the subject, were it not an opinion embraced by vast numbers of our countrymen, that, provided the quiet of individuals, and of the public, is not directly and wantonly disturbed, it is a matter of no serious concern what else is done; that all offences, which do not immediately accomplish this end, are mere venial trifles; and that it is the part of a prudent, and especially of a good-natured magistrate to pass them over in silence. No doctrine can be better fitted to train up villains systematically from the cradle, than this. The truth is, no regulation established by proper authority, however insignificant it may appear, should be violated, no ordinance despised, no injunction disregarded with impunity.

If transgressors are punished in the beginning of their wickedness, we may hope for reformation. There is a progress in villany. No man ever committed murder, or treason, or burglary, as his first offence; and few men ever would commit these enormous crimes, if their first offences were properly reprehended. There is a regular and almost imperceptible gradation in iniquity, from the mischief practised by the truant school boy, to the hardy adventures of the high-handed assassin. It is not a dictate of common sense, or sound experience, to use correction after the offender has become incorrigible. *Obsta principiis*, is a maxim, which ought to be deep-

ly engraven on the heart of every moral agent. At what time does the physician choose to heal a disorder? As soon as it is perceived? or after the functions of life are nearly suspended? At what time is the obstinacy of children most easily subdued? When the seeds of disobedience begin to sprout? when they are first caught in the neglect of their duty? or after they are rooted in vice, and their tempers have become ungovernable? The offender will find great reason to rejoice that he was punished in the first instance of transgression; and that, by a temporary inconvenience or mortification, he is probably withholden from doing what would have occasioned him years of remorse, and stigmatized him with indelible infamy.

It is an invaluable blessing to have the dividing line between what is blameworthy and what is laudable, plainly and exactly drawn. It is an unspeakable privilege to have those, to whose care the execution of the laws is entrusted, zealous to fix the precise meaning of every statute. But where some of the laws are enforced, and some neglected; where some are dead, some expiring, and many in a declining state, the man is beside himself, who expects a cheerful obedience to the rest. He, who has frequently violated any law with impunity, soon justifies himself in the violation of every other, and at length becomes so hardened as to trample on every ordinance, both human and divine.

But the whole system of jurisprudence should be shielded from contempt; and were all

other considerations laid aside, this is abundantly sufficient to compel the greatest exactness. A contempt of the laws is a formidable enemy to government itself; an enemy, which is the more dangerous, as it cannot be met; which declines all fair and honourable war, and vanquishes by the magic of popular prejudice. A little relaxation in the distribution of justice makes way for more; a few despised regulations prepare the mind to despise the rest, till the whole code becomes the object of neglect and ridicule. A statute-book of condemned laws is fit only for inscriptions on the tomb of departed government. It is a volume of satires more poignant than those of Juvenal or Persius; satires on the legislators, the magistrates, and the people; satires, which not only cause a momentary vexation, but inflict upon the general happiness a severe and lasting wound.

Again, it is necessary to the harmony of society, that the execution of the laws be uniform and impartial. If the administration of justice is unsteady; if it vibrates from energy and rigour, to laxness and indolence, and is at one time scrupulously exact, and at another foolishly negligent; nothing permanent and salutary can be expected. And if a dignified impartiality does not characterize the judicial proceedings, it is most plain that there can be no confidence in the rulers, and that government will become the object of distrust and aversion.

Yet it is a notorious and glaring fact, that in no country under heaven, are the rich punish-

ed for what are denominated the smaller kinds of offences. From their elevated situation in life, their example is dreadfully contagious. But if those, who think that the possession of property licences and sanctions their crimes, were properly humbled at the footstool of justice, their example would no longer contaminate society. And if the lower classes of the people saw that no man was superior to the laws, they would acquiesce with much greater alacrity in proper restraints, and all ranks would much more heartily engage in sacrificing individual gratification to the public welfare.

Whoever is in the least acquainted with the state of morals in our country, cannot but confess that much depends upon the execution of the laws. Who does not know that national calamities are the legitimate offspring of national vice and abandonment? And who will not acknowledge that our nation ought to be purified from sin, that the judgments, which hang over us, and which we so justly deserve, may be averted? Look around for yourselves, and consider this matter. Take a view of the fashionable vices only which now prevail; of those practised by the great, the splendid, the honourable, in situations where temptation ought to meet with a firm and an indignant repulse; and then judge what are the crimes perpetrated by those who are debased through the example of superiors; who are unenlightened by education, uninfluenced by a fear of disgrace, and destitute of every restraining principle.

Contemplate the extensive prevalence of profaneness. See the earnest endeavours of wicked men to dishonour the name of God; to invent blasphemies hitherto unthought of; and to gain themselves laurels in the war against Heaven. Hear curses uttered by children unconscious of their meaning; and see the hoary driveller, with one foot in his grave, muttering execrations against his Maker and Preserver. View the drunkard, forfeiting all claim to human society, destroying his intellectual powers, and committing a sure though lingering suicide; a suicide, destroying at the same time his body and his soul. Listen to the midnight orgies of the gaming table, where robbery is legalized by the tribunal of honour, where cheating is elevated into a liberal profession, and where the grand strife is, who shall decoy most adventurers, and sacrifice them to the rapaciousness of the banditti. See the Sabbath, which ought to be a day of rest, of worship, and of instruction in holy things, converted into a day of sloth, a day of visiting, a day of unhallowed amusement, a day of feasting and riot, and, pre-eminently, a day of sin. See men among our Senators, Judges and Governors, foolish and mad enough to go openly and shamelessly to murdering each other in a duel; and all this under laws, which profess to guard life as a thing sacred, and under a religion, which proclaims "peace on earth," and declares, that "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." See adultery proved in our courts, time after time, for the

purpose of obtaining a divorce, and the adulterers suffered to go at large, detested indeed by good men, but unpunished for their crimes, and totally unnoticed by the magistrate. See the seducer practising every fiend-like artifice; committing deliberate, reiterated perjury; destroying the hopes and happiness of brothers, sisters, and parents; and enhancing his guilt by offering up others with himself at the shrine of pollution. In a part of the world where the gospel has been preached from generation to generation; among a people more favoured by Heaven than any other from the fall of man to the present time, brothels are instituted, supported, defended. Rise up, O Babylon, thou mother of harlots, and blush for our enormities. Thy crimson abominations whiten into innocence, when compared with the more aggravated offences of a Christian land.

In this state of things, when every honest man wishes that the laws should have all possible efficacy, much dependence must be placed upon our rulers. Imagine to yourselves all our countrymen, who hold offices in the magistracy, assembled, from the President of the United States, to a Justice of the Peace, or a Grand Juror, and addressed on this important subject by some venerable civilian, like a Hale, or a Mansfield, skilled equally in law and in human nature.

"My friends, and countrymen," would he not say? "use great diligence, that in all your behaviour, your example be such as may be considered a safe pattern for imitation. Transgression of the laws in a magistrate,

is like open wickedness in a minister of the gospel ; it prevents all the good he might otherwise have done, and produces evil which no repentance, no exertions, can repair.

“ When obliged to inflict punishment, let it be seen that justice occupies the first place in your breast, and a dignified clemency the second ; act the part of a friend, and a father, not of an illiberal, unfeeling tyrant.

“ Neither covet nor avoid popularity. Be apt to distrust your own talents in governing, when brought into competition with those of your neighbours. If they are better qualified to hold places of trust, be willing that they should be preferred. Always remember that the man who is elevated by the intrigues of a faction, is never respected by his friends, nor by his enemies ; and what is worse, he seldom does his duty as a wise and faithful magistrate.

“ Never fall into the foolish error of considering less important offices as dishonourable. View the man, who does this, as possessed of a weak mind, and as worthy of no office, of no confidence. Rectitude of conduct, and a just sense of dignity, will render any office honourable.

“ Remember your respective oaths of office. Meditate upon them by night and by day. Consider the engagement into which you have entered, as it really is ; an engagement which Jehovah, the Lord God of Hosts, is called to witness. Resolve to act agreeably to this momentous obligation. If this be not your intention, stand off. “ *Procul, O procul, este profani.*” Touch not

the holy thing with polluted hands. You had better withdraw like cowards from the performance of your duty, than imprecate upon yourselves that divine vengeance, which you are predetermined to deserve.

“ Consider yourselves as always responsible to your country. Tho’ she may not be able to detect and punish, you are still responsible. You are entrusted with a charge of more value than any worldly possession ; a charge of incalculable importance to the present generation, and to posterity : you are to purify the public morals ; you are to guard our youth against the numerous temptations, which lie in wait to devour them. Like the great Roman magistrate, consider your country as addressing you in the most solemn and impressive manner. Let each one of you hear the “ *quid agis, Marce Tulli,*” as applied to himself, and let him ponder well how he shall return a satisfactory answer to this most sacred demand of his country.

“ Above all, consider yourselves as responsible to God. He instituted civil government ; he has given rules for the regulation of your conduct ; he has appointed you his viceregents on earth ; and as your conduct shall prove, so will be your allotments in the day of retribution. If you connive at iniquity ; if you violate your oaths ; if you barter your salvation for a “ mess of pottage,” for a miserable gust of present popularity ; if you enlist under the arch revolter, and assist in withdrawing men from allegiance to God, destruction is even now uncovered to receive you. But if you strive to co-op-

erate with the divine will ; if you conscientiously endeavour to prevent crimes with all your might, you will obtain the applause of good men in this world, and, in the world to come, the approbation of God." C. Y. A.

LETTER OF THE CELEBRATED
DR. JOHNSON, ON HIS WIFE'S
DEATH.

March 17, 1752, O. S.

DEAR SIR,

NOTWITHSTANDING the warnings of philosophers, and the daily examples of losses and misfortunes, which life forces upon us, such is the absorption of our thoughts in the business of the present day, such the resignation of our reason to empty hopes of future felicity, or such our unwillingness to foresee what we dread, that every calamity comes suddenly upon us, and not only presses as a burden, but crushes as a blow.

There are evils, which happen out of the common course of nature, against which it is no reproach not to be provided. A flash of lightning intercepts the traveller in his way ; the concussion of an earthquake heaps the ruins of cities upon their inhabitants ; but other miseries time brings, though silently, yet visibly, forward, by its own lapse, which yet approaches unseen, because we turn our eyes away ; and they seize us unresisted, because we would not arm ourselves against them, by setting them before us.

That it is vain to shrink from what cannot be avoided, and to hide that from ourselves, which

must some time be found, is a truth, which we all know, but which all neglect, and perhaps none more than the speculative reasoner, whose thoughts are always from home, whose eye wanders over life, whose fancy dances after motions of happiness kindled by itself, and who examines every thing rather than his own state.

Nothing is more evident than that the decays of age must terminate in death. Yet there is no man (says Tully) who does not believe that he may yet live another year ; and there is none who does not, upon the same principle, hope another year for his parent, or his friend ; but the fallacy will be in time detected ; the last year, the last day, will come ; it has come, and is past—The life, which made my own life pleasant, is at an end, and the gates of death are shut upon my prospects !

The loss of a friend on whom the heart was fixed, to whom every wish and endeavour tended, is a state of desolation in which the mind looks abroad, impatient of itself, and finds nothing but emptiness and horror. The blameless life, the artless tenderness, the native simplicity, the modest resignation, the patient sickness, and the quiet death, are remembered only to add value to the loss ; to aggravate regret for what cannot be amended ; to deepen sorrow for what cannot be recalled.

These are the calamities by which Providence gradually disengages us from the love of life. Other evils fortitude may repel, or hope mitigate ; but irreparable privation leaves nothing to

exercise resolution, or flatter expectation. The dead cannot return, and nothing is left us here but languishment and grief.

Yet, such is the course of nature, that whoever lives long must outlive those whom he loves and honours. Such is the condition of our present existence, that life must one time lose its association, and every inhabitant of the earth must walk downward to the grave alone and unregarded, without any partner of his joy or grief, without any interested witness of his misfortunes or success. Misfortunes, indeed, he may yet feel, for where is the bottom of the misery of man! But what is success to him, who has none to enjoy it? Happiness is not found in self-contemplation; it is perceived only when it is reflected from another.

We know little of the state of departed souls, because such knowledge is not necessary to a good life. Reason deserts us at the brink of the grave, and gives no farther intelligence. Revelation is not wholly silent; "there is joy among the angels in heaven over a sinner that repenteth;" and surely the joy is communicable to souls disentangled from the body, and made like angels.

Let hope, therefore, dictate, what revelation does not confute, that the union of souls may still remain; and that we, who are struggling with sin, sorrow, and infirmities, may have one part in the attention of those who have finished their course, and are now receiving their reward.

These are the great occasions which force the mind to take

refuge in religion. When we have no help in ourselves, what can remain, but that we look up to a higher and greater power? And to what hope may we not raise our eyes and hearts, when we consider that the *greatest Power is the best*?

Surely there is no man, who, thus afflicted, does not seek succour in the gospel, which has brought life and immortality to light! The precepts of Epicurus, which teach us to endure what the laws of the universe make necessary, may silence, but not content us. The dictates of Zeno, who commands us to look with indifference on abstract things, may dispose us to conceal our sorrow, but cannot assuage it. Real alleviations of the loss of friends, and rational tranquillity in the prospect of our own dissolution, can be received only from the promise of Him in whose hands are life and death; and from the assurance of another and better state, in which all tears will be wiped from our eyes, and the whole soul shall be filled with joy. Philosophy may create stubbornness, but religion only can give patience.

SAM. JOHNSON.

For the Panoplist.

LIST OF BOOKS RECOMMENDED
BY DR. TAPPAN TO THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS.

Messrs. Editors,

WILL it not be grateful to those, who cherish the memory, and approve the sentiments of the late PROFESSOR TAPPAN, to know the course of reading, which he re-

commended to theological students? The following list of books was of Dr. Tappan's forming.

On Natural Religion.

ABERNETHY'S and Leland's sermons on the divine attributes: Clark's demonstration, &c.: Price on morals.

On the Necessity of Revelation.

Leland or Campbell.

On the Proof of Revelation.

Doddridge's three sermons on this subject: Newton on the prophecies: West on the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Littleton on the conversion and apostleship of St. Paul: Farmer on miracles: Paley's Evidences: Butler's Analogy.

On the Doctrines of Revelation.

The expositions of Doddridge, Guise, Henry and Whitby:

Ridgley's body of divinity: Edwards' History of Redemption, and Treatise on the affections: Berry-street sermons: the sermons of Blair, Doddridge, Grove, Lathrop, S. Stennet, Sherlock, Tillotson, R. Walker, Watts, Evans.

On the Christian Church and Ordinances.

Hemmenway and Emmons: Edwards, Lathrop and Towgood on infant baptism: Bell, Grove and Henry on the Lord's supper.

On Jewish and Ecclesiastical History.

Lowman and Shaw on Judaism: Shuckford's and Prideaux's connexions: Jortin's and Mosheim's ecclesiastical history.

Review of New Publications.

A Funeral Oration, pronounced in the chapel of Dartmouth University, on the death of ELIPHALET HARDY, a member of the junior class, who died at Hanover, Jan. 2, 1806, aged 19 years. By JOHN BURNHAM, a classmate. Hanover, M. Davis. 1806.

It is the occasion of this oration, which renders it worthy of public notice. The young man, whose death is here deplored, was endued with remarkable intellectual powers, and engaged, with singular diligence and the most flattering prospect of success, in the pursuit of useful knowledge. His regular and amiable deportment, and the rapid

progress he made in the various branches of learning, gained the love and esteem of all who knew him, and excited the hope, that he would be an ornament to the cause of virtue, and a great blessing to the world.

The following paragraph in the oration, descriptive of the exercises of his mind in his last sickness, deserves particular notice; and leads us to entertain very favourable ideas of the theological views of the writer, as well as of the penitence and submission of his deceased classmate:

"A short time before his death, the deceased was the subject of serious religious impressions. The influence of the Holy Spirit unfolded to

his astonished view the ocean of depravity which exists in the human heart. Deeply impressed with a sense of the rectitude of God's holy law, he was convinced that the punishment of sinners was just. Brought at length to bow to the sceptre of Jesus, he gave satisfactory evidence to those around him, that he was the subject of regenerating grace. When the agonies of his mind had impaired the health of his body, still he spake with the most profound reverence of God and religion; declaring repeatedly, he had no wish the divine law should suffer that he might be saved. Here was evinced that cordial submission to the decrees of Heaven, which constitutes the true Christian."

The youth and inexperience of the writer must be an apology for some incorrect thoughts and expressions, for some uncouthness and harshness in his figures, and for the incoherence of the several parts of his oration.

The Messiah's Reign, a sermon preached on the Fourth of July, before the Washington Society, by JAMES MUIR, D.D. Pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Alexandria. Snowden. Alexandria.

THIS short sermon is founded on the following prophetic description of Christ's reign by the prophet Micah. "He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off, and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his figtree; and none shall make them afraid." The author's plan is to consider these words in their aspect to the Messiah's appear-

ance; to the tendency of the gospel; to the revolution which has taken place in this country; and to the events, which we have reason to believe are hastening forward to their completion. Under each of these heads we find very pertinent remarks. The author is so happy, as not to lose sight either of the text, or of the occasion. We observe a beautiful ease of language, which is natural to one who is blessed with ease of thought. The characteristic trait of the composition is a lively, forcible brevity. In some sentences there is a transposition approaching the air of poetry.

The following specimen shows the author's manner.

In the concluding address—
"Mankind are branches of the same family. Turn to the East or West, to the North or South; traverse the globe from pole to pole. Wherever you meet a human being, you meet a brother or a sister. This Christianity teaches and enforces in the strongest language. The heart of the patriot...glows with a warmth communicated from Scripture. That neglected, that despised, that persecuted book has scattered the seeds of patriotism, and cherished their growth.

"All and each can do something for the benefit of society. Few, it is true, can enlighten the nation, or manage public affairs. Pretensions to this by those whose ignorance and weakness are too apparent to be denied, tend to confusion. Like Phaeton, in the heathen mythology, who unwisely seized with his feeble grasp the reins of his father's fiery steeds, they bring themselves into danger, and expose their fellow-men to dreadful calamities. God fits men for different purposes. Let each know his place. He may be an expert mechanic and a useful farmer, who would prove a most miserable statesman."

The author cannot close without seizing the opportunity to recommend the missionary ob-

fect, and to solicit aid to the missionary fund. This may subject him to the censure of the partial critic, but will much endear him to the heart of the fervent Christian.

Two discourses occasioned by the sudden deaths of Joseph Brown, jun. Æt. 23, and James Jenness, Æt. 24; who were drowned near Rye-Beach, on the evening of 9th Sept. 1806: the former delivered Sept. 10th, at the time of interment; the latter delivered the Lord's day following. By WILLIAM PIDGIN, A. M. Minister of a Presbyterian Church in Hampton. Newburyport. E. W. Allen. 1806.

THESE are plain, serious, pertinent and useful discourses, from the two following well chosen texts: Ecc. ix. 12. *For man also knoweth not his time: As the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.* And Job xxi. 23, 24. *One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet: His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow.*

The melancholy circumstances, which occasioned these discourses, are briefly related in a note, as follows;

"Joseph Brown, of Northampton, and James Jenness, of Rye, together with a man of colour, named Cæsar, had been at Portsmouth. While returning, which was late in the day, the clouds collected, and appeared very black and threatening, attended with frequent lightning, and at length a free discharge of rain. Night came on, which greatly added to the gloominess of the season. They proceeded,

however, with safety, until they had almost reached their homes, about 8 o'clock in the evening, when a heavy squall met them, as they were crossing Rye-ledge, which instantly upset their boat. Cæsar kept his hold of the boat, and was saved, while the others were thrown from it, and at once perished in the deep. Their bodies were found early next morning, and interred the afternoon of the same day."

A Discourse before the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians and others in North America, delivered November 6, 1806. By THOMAS BARNARD, D. D. Minister of the North Church in Salem. To which is added an Appendix. Charlestown. S. Etheridge. pp. 47.

THE theme of this discourse is St. Paul's declaration, Phil. i. 18. *"What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."*

After a pertinent introduction, the preacher invites the attention of his audience to the three following observations.

I. "Permit me to observe the manner in which the Being, supremely powerful, wise and good, chose to propagate Christianity in the world, at the time of its introduction, and in the years immediately succeeding."

II. "Inattentive to the authentic history of the time, we are disposed to think discordance of opinion with respect to the Christian doctrine, could not have arisen under the authoritative and infallible instruction of an holy Apostle; and without hesitation attribute to its first preachers universally the highest purity and benevolence."

III. "There is no mode of action we can adopt, which will more dignify our characters, or more rejoice our hearts in the seasons of impartial reflection, than a persuasion that we are

assisting in our humble measure, in the propagation of the religion of Christ."

Under the first head we are happy to find JESUS CHRIST introduced, as a *divine* teacher and Saviour. But we feel some difficulty in reconciling the following remarks with the idea of his *divinity*, or with the character of Him, *in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily*.

"But with all his divine abilities, he felt the infirmities of a man, and needed human assistance. He chose twelve of the number of his followers to be his confidential friends and ministers, who, being *around his person*, in every place and circumstance, might promptly afford him their aid."

What impression, it is candidly asked, does this representation of Christ make on the mind? Is it not that of *weakness and dependence*? Is it not that of a leader, needing a lifeguard, rather than of him, by whom the worlds were made?

These queries are made, not that we doubt the preacher's belief of the sacred TRINITY; but because we think such a representation of the SON of GOD little calculated to excite the reverence or gratitude of those whom he came to redeem.

Under the *second* head of his discourse the main object of the preacher appears to be, not to prove that differences of opinion relative to doctrine, &c. have existed in all ages of the church; but to shew that the preaching of the gospel, though *various and partial*, has produced very beneficial effects, spiritual and temporal. In evidence of this, and as a specimen of our author's manner, the following extract is given.

"Though the instructors whom they conceive erroneous, may not, in No. 7. Vol. II.

their idea, preach the *whole* gospel, yet do they not preach *parts* of it? Yea, *many solemn and interesting parts of it*? Are not parts of it good for something? Are they not indeed, divine seed, which may spring up, and bear the fruits of immortal life and bliss? If their stated ministers and missionaries promote, by their teaching in *common*, some of the most important subjects of the religion they believe, is it not their duty, in these respects, to rejoice in their labours, and wish them success? Let us now appeal to the fact to determine how far, in union together, they preach the truths of the gospel. Do they not unitedly preach the *evidences* of Christ's mission; state his gospel the only *infallible directory of our faith and manners*; and charge us to consult it upon all important questions with teachable minds, if we would be made "wise unto salvation?" Do they not propose, and warmly recommend to the love and imitation of their hearers, his *example*? An example pure and exalted beyond what poets had fancied, or historians, sacred or human, described before he lived; for till then, they never beheld, nor heard of such excellence of worth, such beauty of character in our form. Do they not urge upon us his *precepts*, as the supreme rule of our temper and conduct, because "the wisdom which is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy? Do they not affirm, in the words of the apostle, notwithstanding their hypothesis to render the subject more intelligible may differ, "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins, that are past, through the forbearance of God?" Do they not, divinely taught by their Master, bring *life and immortality* beyond the grave, into a state of clearer and more splendid light, than it had been by the philosophers of the world, and even by inspired teachers before he came, and place it in a point of view, calculated, more than any other, deeply to im-

press the human mind and passions, *a scene of complete moral retribution?* Do not the *motives* they inculcate to excite us to well doing, and to deter us from evil, exceed in weight and consequence all which any other religious instructor has ever taught for this holy end?"

With our benevolent author we cheerfully admit, as a delightful fact, that "high spiritual advantages have attended the preaching of Christ, though the salutary office has been performed with varying degrees of light, ability, and success; that the Christian world is the fairest portion of this earth; and that no particular class of Christians can claim these good effects, as arising exclusively from their modes of teaching." Still, however, it seems reasonable to suppose, that the influence of the gospel would have been greater, had it been preached with more light, ability and uniformity; especially if the *whole* gospel had been thus preached. Admitting, with our catholic author, that instructors, deemed erroneous, "preach *parts* of the gospel," and that they unitedly preach the *evidences* of Christ's mission," and state his gospel the only *infallible directory* of our faith and manners; that they warmly recommend his *example* and urge upon us his *precepts*; that they exhibit "*life and immortality* in a more splendid light, than any philosophers or even inspired teachers" before his coming, and inculcate "*motives*" to virtue, exceeding in weight those of any former religious teacher; nevertheless, if other instructions be not added, we are painfully apprehensive, that the most *important parts* of the gospel are not preached by such "*ministers*

or *missionaries*." If all the truths, which such teachers preach "in union," are here named by our author; it may well be doubted, whether the influence of Christianity on the moral character of individuals, or even on society, would much surpass that of the philosophy of Socrates, did not other preachers often exceed *their* limits. If we are taught in the gospel, that by nature we are morally *depraved* and children of *wrath*; that we are *dead* in trespasses and sins, and *enemies* to God; that we must be *born again* and become *new* creatures; that sin is atoned only by the *blood of Jesus*, and that this Jesus is a *divine* person; that justification is the work of *God's Spirit*, and that our salvation is *wholly of grace*, through faith, and that *not* of ourselves;—these doctrines must not only be parts, but the *essential* parts, of the gospel, since they give to man, and to Christianity, a character and features, not merely different, but opposite to those, usually ascribed to them, in systems of theology, in which these doctrines are set aside. The Scripture constantly supposes that the truth may be preached, as well as professed, by bad men and from bad motives. Still it is *truth*; and this was the ground of the apostle's joy. He rejoiced, that in any way or with any *disposition* (even if the motive were cruel) *Christ* was preached. Here is no reference, either to the nature or number of the doctrines preached. The fair import of the passage is, that those, who were actuated by envy, preached the *same* doctrines with those, who preached from good will. This

text, therefore, does not warrant the supposition, that Paul ever rejoiced in any preaching, or system of theology, which was in his view deficient in any *essential* article of the Christian faith; and, it is presumed, more will not be required of us, than of him.

We now leave it to the intelligent reader to determine for himself, whether the kind of preaching, above described, tho', like the ancient philosophy, it may be useful to civil society, may not endanger the final salvation of the *individual*, by concealing from him his true character and the only medium of pardon, and by leading him to depend on himself, and not upon God alone.

It is a great pleasure to us, in this connexion, that we are able to except the worthy author of this discourse from the number of those superficial preachers, whom he has described. Nor would our duty, on this occasion, have been equally imperious, had the mantle of catholicism been cast by a gentleman, less respectable for talents, natural and acquired.

To the correctness and weight of sentiment, expressed by our author under the *last* head of his discourse, we are happy to give our cordial testimony. We rejoice to find the preacher here in his own element, while celebrating the excellencies of that

religion, which alone "gives glory to God, on earth peace, good will towards men."

The length, peculiar structure, and consequent intricacy of some periods in this discourse, may, perhaps, have led us to mistake our author's meaning. Errors springing from this source, will not be charged to our account. With frankness we confess, that the perusal of this sermon has frequently reminded us of the old, but useful adage, *Bis ad limam quod semel ad linguam*.

The appendix to this discourse contains an account of the proceedings of the Society, before whom it was preached. The greater part of their funds, it appears, are expended in books for distribution, and in the support of missionaries and schools in the district of Maine, which, for convenience, they have divided into seven *missionary districts*, here described; in each district books are deposited, with some suitable person, for distribution. The instructions given by the Society to their missionaries, together with an account of the number of missionaries employed the current year, and some interesting extracts from their journals,* are inserted in this appendix, which concludes with a list of the present officers of the Society.

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* These extracts are inserted under the head of "*Religious Intelligence*," which see.

Religious Intelligence.

UNITED STATES.

SOCIETY FOR PROPAGATING THE
GOSPEL.

THE Society for Propagating the
Gospel among the Indians and others

in North America, in their Annual Report of Nov. 1806, state, that they have employed *four* missionaries this year in the District of Maine. The

Journal of one only (the Rev. Mr. Hidden) had been received.

Mr. Hidden completed his missionary labours, in the counties of York and Oxford, early in November. His journal has been received, from which it appears, that he has travelled about seven hundred miles, preached ninety-two sermons, baptized seven adult persons, one by immersion, and forty-three children; received twenty-four persons into church communion, visited twenty-seven aged and sick persons, established four schools, administered the Lord's supper four times, visited eleven schools, and sixty families, and distributed about two hundred books. Mr. Hidden observes, that "the weather was so favourable during the whole of his mission, (of three months) that he was hindered from travelling but a single day:" that "people in general were very ready to attend on the word and ordinances of God," that "many manifested warm gratitude to God, and thankfulness to the society for their notice of them;" that "he found the schools, which had been begun by the society, in excellent order." Of the inhabitants in many of the towns he visited, he speaks in terms of high commendation, for their industry, frugality, peace and order; and particularly for their attention and exertions in educating their children. Of the town of Lovel especially, containing forty families, all of the Congregational denomination, he says, "there is the greatest attention to religion in this place, according to the number of people, and the least enthusiasm, I ever saw." "Sabbath, Nov. 2, preached at Lovel, and administered the Lord's supper; received nineteen persons into the church, baptized one adult and ten children. One received into the church was seventy-nine years old, another sixteen. God is doing wonders here. This was one of the most solemn and joyful days I ever saw." Though few in number, they contemplate settling a minister among them. The church in a letter to the secretary, in very affectionate terms, express their grateful acknowledgments to God and to the Society, for "sending missionaries to preach to poor, perishing sinners, the unsearchable riches of Christ." They speak of the success of Mr. Hidden's labours among

them, as "wonderful;" *twenty-one* have been added to their church, under his ministration, in this small settlement. They conclude by expressing their earnest desire that "we who send, and they who receive, may unite in our prayers to God, that he would continue the gospel among them." A letter to the Society, of like import, has been received from the inhabitants of the town of Albany.

From the acceptance and success of Mr. Hidden's labours, and the good dispositions manifested by the people to whom he was sent, the Society have great reason to be satisfied with their missionary, and much encouragement to continue their attentions to those, who so gratefully receive, and so commendably improve them.

Since our last annual report, the aged and reverend Zechariah Mayhew, long a diligent and faithful missionary in the service of the Society, among the remnant of Indians* on Martha's Vineyard, has deceased. The ancestors of these Indians were among the first of the aborigines of New England, who embraced Christianity; and from that time to the present, they have not ceased to enjoy the ordinances of the gospel. Though these people have at present among them, two ordained Indian teachers, by the name of Hansuit and Jeffer, (the latter a temperate, worthy man) yet as both are advanced in life, the Society contemplate making further provision for their instruction, and will not cease to contribute, according to their means, to the support of religious ordinances among them.

The venerable Mr. Hawley, now in the eightieth year of his age, and in the fifty-fifth of his missionary labours, and who receives annually a

.....
* The number of people of colour, taken from actual enumeration, at Gay Head, Martha's Vineyard, were as follows, in October, 1806.

Between four and twenty-one years old,	94
Of twenty-one years and upward,	
men 43, women 75,	118
	<hr/>
	212

The number under four years not mentioned.

part of his support from the Society, is still diligent, active, and successful, in discharging the duties of his mission at Marshpee. He is justly venerated by his people, who are chiefly of mixed blood, as their father, and the protector of their rights and property. ¶ (To be continued.)

Extract from the Minutes of the proceedings of the Synod of Albany of the Presbyterian Church, at their Session in Whitesborough, held on the 1st and 2d days of October, 1806.

THE Synod have heard with pleasure, that the institutions of religion within their bounds are well attended, and treated with marked reverence and affection. In some places striking instances of the triumphs of the cross have occurred, and in most the work of God seems to be advancing, though silently, yet surely. The youth are instructed in the principles of our holy religion with considerable and commendable assiduity. Peace and harmony prevail generally, and the good order of the church is preserved unimpaired. Vacant congregations are supplying, new ones are forming, and the cry for additional preachers of the word becomes more loud and urgent. The pastors appear to fulfil their duties, and the flocks theirs, so that between them, excepting in very few instances, exists the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Although the prospect externally is thus promising, Synod regret that so much coldness and formality pre-

....

§ One hundred dollars, beside some occasional grants of small sums, stationary and books.

¶ These Indians possess several thousand acres of land, which were sequestered and secured to their ancestors, and their successors, by Richard Bourn, their pastor, who first planted Christianity here, about a century and a half ago. This plantation is an asylum for Indians from various parts of New England and Long Island, and some have resorted here from Georgia, and even from the East-Indies. They are not numerous. The Indians of unmixed blood do not exceed forty or fifty persons.

vail among Christians who enjoy so many gospel privileges; that so few, compared with the whole number of sinners who hear the gospel, feel its power and accept its offers in love; that in some societies gross sins abound, and into others essential errors have crept. Deeming it a sacred duty to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, Synod take this opportunity of raising their warning voice against this coldness; these sins and errors. It is mournful that they who are snatched from perdition by the grace of Jesus should ever be careless in the service of their Master; should ever permit their love to decay in its ardour or its public expression. Christians ought ever to be awake and walk, as becometh children of light, and the redeemed of God. It is high time for them to do so, since the night is far spent, and the day is at hand. They must gird on the armour of Jehovah, and bear testimony against sins, especially those which abound. Drunkenness and profanity, and sabbath breaking ought not to be so much as named among Christians; and Synod hope that all who are in their connexion will most studiously avoid the appearance of evil as well as its practice; and that they will admonish and exhort all, who are guilty of immorality, to repent and live godly in Christ Jesus.

Error in practice arises from error in doctrine; not that all who are correct in the latter, are always so in the former; for many are only nominal believers, who though they profess the truth in words, hold it in unrighteousness. Between sound principle and sound conduct there is an inseparable connexion. Synod therefore, whilst they warn their churches against immorality, warn them solemnly against errors. Those which chiefly prevail respect the future destiny of sinners, and the character and work of the Redeemer. Satan is still instilling into the hearts of sinners what he said unto the woman in paradise, "ye shall not surely die." He is filling them with the hope, that though they live after the flesh, they will finally be saved. Thus he is exciting them to turn the grace of God into licentiousness. Christians ought not to be deceived. Sin is an awful

evil, and merits infinite displeasure. It need only be realized, to be thus acknowledged, and that with pungent grief of soul. We exhort our churches to beware of rejecting this solemn truth.

Great as their error is, who do this, it is surpassed by that of those who deny the only Lord God who bought them. Over their sad and dreadful mistake we weep with unfeigned sorrow. The divinity and atonement of Christ, are written as with a sun beam in Scripture, and are felt to be truths by all awakened souls. Let none be deceived by a parade of learning in the opposers of these doctrines. These men arrogate to themselves a greater share of it than they really possess. Their conduct is imposing, but their foundation is unstable as the wind. Before their opinions can be substantiated, the Scriptures must be abandoned: for if these be explained, according to the mode of explaining works of uninspired men, Christ is truly God, and has paid the price of redemption for our sins. We receive these truths, as they are published in the volume of inspiration, confessedly a mystery, but it is "the mystery of godliness," worthy of Jehovah, and necessary for sinful man. Without this mystery the convinced sinner can find no peace here, or hope for eternity. To the law and testimony; if we speak not according to these, it is because there is no light in us. We leave these sentiments with you! we appeal to your consciences! we call on the churches to defend the common salvation with the temper of the gospel. Many of them are the posterity of those, who for the same precious truths, left their native homes, braved the terrors of the deep, and settled in a country then inhabited by savages. We pray that the spirit, they felt, may influence their descendants, and all who belong to our Zion. May great grace, mercy and peace be multiplied unto all such, and all believers every where, from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Saviour.—AMEN.

JONAS COE, *Moderator.*

FEMALE EXERTIONS FOR SPREADING THE GOSPEL.

To the Editors of the Panoplist.

GENTLEMEN,

THE multiplied and liberal exertions of Christ's female disciples in promoting his kingdom, are a consoling evidence of the power of his grace in their hearts, and are the lively expressions of their attachment and fidelity to him, and of their disinterested, ardent wishes for the recovery and salvation of immortal souls. The Divine Jesus, in our age, no less than in the days of his apostles, has given discriminating marks of his love and kindness to the daughters of Zion, by exciting their affections to him, and by animating their zeal and liberality to minister to the necessities of his poor members. They have the marked honour of taking an active and leading part in repairing the desolations, and building up the walls of our Jerusalem. Numerous are the instances of female charity to the souls of men. Among others, let the Panoplist record the seasonable and benevolent exertions of a number of devout ladies in Whitestown, New York, who have formed themselves into a society for the purpose of aiding missionary labours in the new settlements of our country, by the name of The Female Charitable Society of Whitestown; and, as the first proof of their pious benevolence, have collected and contributed to the funds of the Hampshire Missionary Society, for the purpose of promoting missions, the sum of \$110. To this information, which must be pleasing to the friends of Jesus, let me subjoin an extract of a letter, written by a worthy minister in the District of Maine, to a member of the Hampshire Missionary Society.

EXTRACT. "From sober report, the presence of God, I conclude, accompanied your missionaries, when they were here, and in other places also. I feel a degree of thankfulness to God that he has been pleased to favour you with such missionaries, as you have sent into Maine. They are an honour to your Society. They comfort & rejoice the hearts of God's poor people, who are sad and solitary, and destitute in the wilderness.

"I observe in the Report of the Trustees of your Society for August, 1805, this entertaining period, 'Total from Female Association, \$278 88.' When the condescending God ordered the erection of a tabernacle, that he might dwell among his people, the sacred story is this; *And all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue and of purple and of scarlet and of fine linen. And all the women, whose heart stirred them up in wisdom, spun goat's hair.* Three thousand years have now elapsed since this piece of history was recorded by an amanuensis of the Holy Spirit; since which time there has nothing of the kind come to my knowledge more pleasing, and more similar to this piece of ancient history, than the efforts of the Female Association in Hampshire county to build, enlarge, and ornament the tabernacle of the glorious Redeemer, *the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.* May they never be weary in well doing; *for they shall in due season reap, if they faint not.*"

Q.

To the foregoing, the Editors think proper to add the following particulars of the Female Society above mentioned, from their Constitution and Circular Letter.

This Society was formed in September last, at Whitestown, which, twenty years ago, was a wilderness. The members of this institution, believing that a portion of the bounties of Providence can be applied in no better way than in administering to the spiritual necessities of their fellow creatures, and convinced of the utility and importance of missionaries, by whose benevolent exertions the glad tidings of redemption are carried to multitudes, who are perishing for lack of knowledge; and wishing to co-operate with such societies, by contributing their mite towards the advancement of so good a cause, associated for that purpose.

The Society is under the management of six Trustees, who choose their Treasurer to receive the monies subscribed, and to keep their accounts and records. Each subscriber is to pay one dollar annually to the Treasurer.

The specific object of the Association is expressed in their circular letter.

"We humbly hope, we in some measure feel the magnitude of the object, which is, the advancement of the cause of the dear Redeemer. This we would endeavour to promote by contributing to the support of faithful missionaries, who are sent to break the bread of life to those who are destitute of the ordinary means of grace, which we so richly enjoy.

"We have recently been told, by missionaries returning from distant parts of our country, of persons who have come to them, and with tears in their eyes assured them, they had not heard a sermon for fourteen years before; and who, taking them affectionately by the hand, have invoked the blessing of Heaven on their heads, and on the heads of those charitable persons, whose compassionate hearts had moved them to commiserate their unhappy condition, and to send the word of life and salvation to their perishing souls."

May "the blessing of many ready to perish" come upon this Society; and others of their sex, more liberally favoured with the bounties of Providence, when they shall read the above, be excited to "go and do likewise."

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM A
GENTLEMAN IN PHILADELPHIA
TO HIS CORRESPONDENT IN BOS-
TON.

Philadelphia, Nov. 23, 1806.

SIR,

--- I SUBJOIN an extract of a letter received by Dr. Stoughton, of this city, from Mr. Carey, dated at Calcutta, the 25th Oct. 1805. "The third volume of the Bible, from Job to Canticles inclusive, is published. The second edition of the New Testament will be out in about a month. The prophets are begun, and we intend to begin printing the historical books from Joshua forwards in a few weeks. The gospel by Matthew is printed (nearly) in the Mahratta language; nearly the whole New and some parts of the Old Testament are translated into that language, that of the Oris-

se, the Hindostanne, and Persian. The gospels in Hindostanne, and Matthew in Persian, are printed for the college at another press. We have some more extensive plans for translations in contemplation, if God prosper us."

In a pamphlet, entitled, "Periodical Accounts relative to the Baptist Missionary Society," I find the following: "We are forwarding the translating and printing of the Scriptures as fast as possible. The third volume of the Bible is finished. We have almost got through the second edition of the New Testament; we want it much, as we have not a single copy of the first edition left."

Subsequent to these advices, there can be no doubt but considerable progress has been made in this all important work; and if the Lord please to spare the lives of his servants, now engaged in the translations and printing, and open the hearts of his people to furnish pecuniary aid, there is every reason to hope, that a few years will produce translations and publications of the whole of the

Scriptures into the seven languages of India.

The mission last year was strengthened by the accession of four missionaries from England by the way of this country. This year two more have been conveyed directly from England; but no information is yet received of their arrival. The London Missionary Society, in the last year, also, dispatched six missionaries, who all arrived safely at Madras. Three of these were settled in Ceylon, two at Vizagapatam, and one at Tranquebar. Two more arrived after these, from the same Society, whose destination was for Surat. Thus the enemy's kingdom, in that dark corner of the earth, is invested on many sides.

With this you will receive a copy of the gospel by Matthew in the Mahratta language, and if you think it will be useful to promote the laudable work you have in hand, I can procure and will forward a copy of the New Testament and Pentateuch in Bengalee.

Your friend, — —

List of New Publications.

A Discourse before the Society for propagating the Gospel among the Indians and others in North America, delivered November 6, 1806. By Thomas Barnard, D. D. minister of the north church in Salem. Charlestown. Samuel Etheridge. 1806.

A Sermon, delivered Sept. 14, 1806, at the interment of Mrs. Rachel Smith, relict of the late Hon. Thomas Smith, Esq. who died Sept. 12, in the 74th year of her age. By Henry Lincoln, minister of the Congregational church in Falmouth, Barnstable county. Boston. E. Lincoln. 1806.

The happy voyage completed, and the sure anchor cast. A Sermon, occasioned by the universally lamented death of Capt. Jonathan Parsons, who departed this life at sea, Dec. 29, 1784, in the 50th year of his age: preached at the Presbyterian church in Newburyport, February 27, 1785. Published at the request of the Ma-

rine Society there. By John Murray. A. M. pastor of said church. Reprinted. Newburyport. E. W. Allen. December, 1806.

A Sermon, delivered by Ezra Stiles Ely, on the first Sabbath after his ordination. Hartford. Lincoln and Gleason. 1806.

An account of the Massachusetts Society for promoting Christian knowledge. Published by order of the Society. Cambridge, W. Hilliard. 1806. pp. 44.

An account of the Massachusetts State Prison. Containing a description and plan of the edifice; the law, regulations, rules and orders; with a view of the present state of the Institution. By the Board of Visitors. Charlestown. Samuel Etheridge. Dec. 1806.

Christianity Displayed, or a rational view of the great Scripture doctrine of Redemption and Salvation, through Jesus Christ—together with

some practical observations. By a Citizen of Baltimore. 8vo. 25 cents.

Charity recommended from the social state of man. A Discourse, delivered before the Salem Female Charitable Society, September 17, 1806. By Rev. John Prince, LL. D. 8vo. pp. 39. Salem. Joshua Cushing.

A Discourse, delivered at Stillwater, before the members of Montgomery Lodge, August 12, 1806. By David Butler, Rector of St. Paul's Church, Troy, and of Trinity Church, Lansinburgh. 8vo. pp. 24. Troy, N. Y. Wright, Goodenow, and Stockwell.

A Sermon, preached July 13, 1805, at the funeral of Mrs. Lydia Fisk, late consort of the Rev. Elisha Fisk, pastor of the church in Wrentham. By Nathanael Emmons, D. D. pastor of the church in Franklin. Dedham. H. Mann. August, 1805.

The Life of God in the Soul of Man; or, the nature and excellency of the Christian Religion. By Henry Scougal, A. M. To which are prefixed, memoirs of the author. Boston. E. Lincoln.

A Discourse, delivered next Lord's day after the interment of Deacon Peter Whiting, who departed this life, December 9, 1805, in the 60th year of his age. By Nathanael Emmons, D. D. pastor of the church in Franklin. Providence. Heaton and Williams.

An Oration, pronounced at Littleton, July 4, 1806, the 31st anniversary of American Independence. By Edmund Foster, A. M. minister of the gospel at Littleton. Cambridge. Hilliard. 1806.

The Death of Legal Hope, and the Life of Evangelical Obedience. An essay on Gal. ii. 19. Shewing that while a sinner is in the law, as a covenant, he cannot live to God in the performance of duty: and that the moral law is immutable in its nature, and of perpetual use, as the rule of a believer's conduct. By Abraham Booth. 12mo. pp. 84. Boston. Manning & Loring.

Scott's Family Bible, vols. I, II, & III. Price to subscribers \$6 per

vol. Philadelphia. W. W. Woodward. These vols. complete the Old Testament. The fourth and last, which contains the New Testament, will be finished in the spring.

American Annals; or, a Chronological History of America from its Discovery in 1492 to 1806. In two volumes. By Abiel Holmes, D. D. A. A. S. S. H. S. minister of the first church in Cambridge. Vol. II. Cambridge. W. Hilliard.

Horæ Paulinæ; or, the truth of the scripture history of St. Paul evinced by a comparison of the epistles which bear his name with the Acts of the Apostles, and with one another. By William Paley, D. D. Cambridge. W. Hilliard. 1806.

PROPOSED BY SUBSCRIPTION.

A Theological Dictionary, containing definitions of all religious terms; a comprehensive view of every article in the system of divinity; an impartial account of all the principal denominations, which have subsisted in the religious world, from the birth of Christ to the present day; together with an accurate statement of the most remarkable transactions and events recorded in ecclesiastical history. By Charles Buce. Philadelphia. W. W. Woodward.

A complete system of Geography, ancient and modern, in 6 volumes 8vo. By James Playfair, D. D. Principal of the United College of St. Andrew's; Historiographer to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales; F. R. S. F. A. S. Edinburgh; and author of "A system of Chronology." Philadelphia. J. Watts.

Collins, Perkins, & Co. of New York, propose to put immediately to press, a new and valuable work, entitled *French Homonyms*, or a collection of words, similar in sound, but different in meaning or spelling. By John Martin, professor of languages in New York.

The Era of Missions. By William Staughton, D. D. pastor of the First Baptist Church, Philadelphia.

Ordinations.

ORDAINED at Sandbornton, N. H. on the 13th November, the Rev. Abraham Bodwell, over the Congregational church and society in that town. The Rev. H. C. Parley of Methuen, Mass. made the introductory prayer; Rev. Asa M'Farland, of Concord, preached from Ephesians iii. 8, 9, and 10. Rev. Ethan Smith, of Hopkinton, made the consecrating prayer; Rev. Isaac Smith, of Gilmanton, gave the charge; Rev. Thomas Worcester, of Salisbury, gave the fellowship of the churches; and Rev. Mr. Babcock, of Andover, made the concluding prayer.

Respecting this transaction there was great unanimity in the church and society; and the order and propriety which were observed during the solemnities of ordination, reflect honour on the inhabitants of the town.

On the 4th Sept. the presbytery of Oneida ordained Mr. George Hall, of East-Haddam, Connecticut, to the work of the gospel ministry, and installed him in the pastoral charge of the congregation of Cherry Valley. The Rev. J. Southworth, of Bridgewater, made the introductory prayer, and gave the right hand of fellowship; the Rev. Samuel F. Snowden, of New-Hartford, delivered the sermon; the Rev. James Carnahan, of Whitesborough, made the ordaining prayer; the Rev. Joshua Knight, of Sherburne, presided, and gave the charges to the minister and to the people; and the Rev. Andrew Oliver, late of Pelham, in Massachusetts, made the concluding prayer.

This ordination is the fourth which has occurred within the space of four months, in the Presbyterian and Congregational churches in this part of

the country. In June, the Rev. Mr. Clark was ordained and installed in the town of Milton; a few months previous to which the Rev. Mr. Shadwick was installed in another congregation in the same town. In July, the Rev. Mr. Rich was ordained and installed at Sangersfield. In August, the Rev. Mr. Adams was ordained and installed in a congregation in Sherburne.

It is a subject of pleasing contemplation, and cause of lively gratitude to God, that congregations are now formed, and supplied with pastors, in places which but a few years since, were a wilderness.

The ordinations above mentioned are confined to churches, which from their agreement in doctrine and conformity in worship, and spirit of discipline, may be considered as forming one denomination. Baptist churches likewise increase in numbers; and an Episcopal church, which has a settled pastor, was consecrated on the 7th inst. at Utica.

On Tuesday the 23d of September last, the presbytery of Oneida ordained Mr. William Neill, a licenciate late of the presbytery of New-Brunswick, to the work of the gospel ministry, and installed him pastor of the congregation of Cooperstown. The exercises were performed in the following order, and by the following persons: The Rev. Andrew Oliver made the introductory prayer; the Rev. James Carnahan delivered the sermon, from Luke ii. 34; the Rev. Joshua Knight presided and made the ordaining prayer; the Rev. George Hall gave the right hand of fellowship; and the Rev. Samuel F. Snowden delivered the charges to the minister and people, and made the concluding prayer.

Obituary.

MEMOIRS OF MRS. HANNAH HODGE.

(Concluded from p. 248.)

IN 1745, as nearly as can be ascertained, the subject of this narrative

was married to Mr. Hugh Hodge. He too was one to whom the labours of Mr. Whitefield had been remarkably blest; and was chosen one of the first deacons of the church which, as

we have already seen, was formed by an association of the particular friends and adherents of that eminent preacher. Mr. Hodge "used the office of a deacon well;" sustaining it with great fidelity and reputation to the day of his death. On his side, as well as on that of his wife, a regard to religious comfort and improvement had a governing influence in the choice which they made of each other as partners for life; and experience fully demonstrated, that on both sides a wise and happy choice had been formed. Seldom has religion appeared to more advantage in the conjugal relation, than in that which subsisted between Mr. and Mrs. Hodge. For nearly forty years they were emphatically "helps-mete" to each other in Christian duty, and in their journey to the heavenly rest. "They walked before the Lord in all his ordinances and commandments," with a blamelessness of which the examples are rare.

Coming together with a very small portion of worldly property between them, they had to provide for their subsistence by their own efforts. These efforts were mutual, strenuous, and constant; and by the smiles of Providence, such was their success in business, that they were able not only to live in a comfortable and reputable manner; but to show a most amiable example of hospitality, to perform numerous acts of charity and liberality, to be among the foremost in the support of the gospel, and, after all, to remain possessed of a handsome capital.

This pious couple had two children, a son and a daughter. The daughter died in infancy; but the son lived to grow up, to receive a liberal education, to study physic, and to give promise of future usefulness to the world, and of comfort to his parents. But these expectations were soon blasted. During the revolutionary war, he went to sea, on a voyage of enterprize, with a number of other promising youth of the city of Philadelphia, and no certain information was ever received afterwards, either of them, or the vessel in which they sailed. The probability is, that all were buried together in the bosom of the ocean. The anxiety which Mr. and Mrs. Hodge experienced through

a long period of time, during which there was some hope that their son might be alive, and the grief which they suffered when they were at last obliged to consider it as a melancholy fact that their only child was no more, can better be supposed than described. It is of more importance to remark, that their distress, great as it was, never sunk them into dejection or despondence, never brought from them any unavailing or unchristian complaints, but was borne with a resignation truly Christian, and a fortitude truly exemplary. Mrs. Hodge, who had both hopes and fears, in regard to the real piety of her son, told the writer of these memoirs that she had passed many an hour in musing on what was probably his eternal state. "After all," said she, "it must be left entirely with a sovereign and holy God; but I may, must, and do hope, if I get to heaven, to find him there."

The death of her daughter, who was her first child, she has been heard to affirm, gave her very little disturbance. "I had been married eleven years," said she to an intimate friend, "and had no child. Nor was I very anxious on the subject, till on a certain occasion, I was much interested in seeing an infant devoted to God in baptism, in our church. I was then forcibly struck with the thought, that a Christian parent possesses an unspeakable privilege, who gives birth to an immortal being, and is permitted to give it away to God, in this his instituted ordinance. On the spot I fervently prayed for this privilege, if it should be consistent with God's will to grant it; and I solemnly vowed that if it should be granted, I would, by his grace assisting me, unreservedly devote to him the child which he should give me. My prayer was answered, my vow was performed, and my child was taken to God, all within a year."

During the life of deacon Hodge, his house was constantly open for the reception of all *evangelical* clergymen who visited the city. The cordial welcome which always met them there, and the pleasure which they both gave and received, made them love to resort to this happy dwelling. To many of them it was, for several years, a home, to which they went

with as much freedom as they would have felt in going to a house of their own. Such, indeed, was the deep interest which both Mr. and Mrs. Hodge took in every thing that related to the church, such their eminent piety, and such the influence of their opinion upon others, that their sentiments on many interesting subjects, were asked by their clerical visitors, and are well known to have had weight in several important public concerns.

The house of deacon Hodge was also remarkable as a place in which religious associations, and assemblies of various kinds, were frequently held. Pious conferences, prayer meetings, and the exhortations of the ministers of the gospel to as many as the house and yard could contain, were here always welcome, often witnessed, and in many instances eminently blessed.

A general outline has now been exhibited of the life and habits of this pious couple, for a long series of years. Harmony between themselves, active attention to necessary worldly business, with a singular beneficence, charity, and piety, rendered them shining examples of practical and primitive Christianity.

Deacon Hodge died A. D. 1783. By his will he left the use of nearly his whole estate to his wife during her life, and at her death, made it a fund for the education of poor and pious youth for the gospel ministry, in the college of New Jersey. Mrs. Hodge bore the loss of her husband, not indeed without keen distress, for all her feelings were remarkably acute, but yet with such a becoming and sweet submission to the divine will, as was extremely amiable and instructive. She cherished a fond remembrance of her husband through the whole remainder of her life, on all occasions she honoured his memory, often spoke of him with tenderness, and yet, after her first sorrows, never with much apparent emotion, but in the same manner in which she would have mentioned a dear absent friend, whom she shortly expected to meet again. Happy spirits! ye are now united, never more to part.

The house of Mrs. Hodge, after the death of her husband, was the same hospitable mansion as before, the

same place for sacred conferences, and meetings for prayer and religious improvement. One of these meetings was held weekly at her house till a short time before her death, and was, as she acknowledged, a valuable substitute for the privilege of public worship, from which her infirmities at that time often detained her. For many years after the death of her husband she likewise continued the business of shop-keeping, to which she had long been accustomed. He had left her an easy maintenance, independently of any exertions of her own. But she continued in her former occupation from considerations, which manifested equally her benevolence and piety, and her good sense and knowledge of human nature. The income from her shop, which was considerable, was almost wholly applied to charitable uses, and sometimes she even added to it from her other resources. Thus, though she did not labour for her own subsistence, she had the satisfaction of providing more extensively than she could otherwise have done for the poor, the friendless, and the pious: and while she performed an important duty, gratified highly the feelings of her heart. But she also well knew the effect of habit on herself. She knew that having long been accustomed to fill up a large portion of the day with active business, she would be likely to feel the want of it, both in body and mind, when it should be discontinued. Accordingly, when her infirmities at last compelled her to relinquish her employment, she declared that she regretted it, principally because she found it unfavourable to her religious state. "You are very fortunate, madam," said a friend to her pleasantly, "very fortunate, indeed, in having no care or anxiety about the world; no business to take up your time or attention; nothing to do from morning till night, but to read, and meditate, and pray, and converse with your friends." "For all that," answered she, "I have not half so much comfort, not even in religion, as when I was bustling half the day behind the counter. I need more variety than I now get. I become moped and stupid for the want of something to rouse me. Beside all this, vain, fool-

ish, wicked, and vexatious thoughts are almost constantly working their way into my mind, because I have so much of that time, which you talk of, for meditation. And, in addition to all, I become lazy and indolent, and do nothing as I ought to do. No, I was a great deal better off when I had some worldly business to which I could attend moderately. It did me good in every way. I must get along as well as I can, now that I am incapable of business, but I find it no advantage, but the contrary, to be without it." It is believed that this was the language of truth, of nature, of experience. Those who have led a busy life, should contract their business as age advances, but they will seldom find it beneficial, even to a life of religion, to be wholly unemployed in worldly concerns.

Mrs. Hodge had three attacks of an apoplectic or paralytic kind, within the last sixteen years of her life. But she wonderfully recovered from them, and possessed all her faculties, in a degree of vigour beyond what is usually seen in persons of her age, till about two years before her death. Then her decay became rapid and visible. On the 16th of Dec. 1805, in going to bed, she was seized with a fit. Medical aid was used to restore her, and she recovered so far as to know and speak to those who were about her, especially to the pastors of the church to which she belonged. In the course of the evening, they both, at different times, prayed with her, and she appeared capable of joining in the service, at least for a part of the time. But her mind was evidently in a broken, wandering, and enfeebled state. Still, however, it seemed to draw to the centre which had so long attracted it. 'Help, Lord Jesus! help; come Lord Jesus, come quickly,' were sentences that she often repeated. She had a succession of slight paralytic affections during the night, and early in the morning, *fell asleep in the Lord*, expiring without a sigh, a struggle, or so much as the motion of a single muscle.

Few persons in the city of Philadelphia had so extensive a religious acquaintance as Mrs. Hodge. To them these memoirs will be interesting, and to others a part of them may

be useful. They will be closed with an attempt to give the most striking features of her character.

Among the natural powers of her mind, she was most of all distinguished by that faculty which has been denominated *common sense*, and of which it has been truly said, that "though no science, it is fairly worth the seven." Except on the subject of religion, she had read but little; and in what is usually understood by mental improvement, she had made no great progress. Her powers of judging and distinguishing were naturally strong, and these she had improved by thinking much, and observing accurately. Hence she seldom gave an opinion which did not deserve to be heard with respect, and which was not proved by experience to be just. This was the source of the influence which she possessed, and which was singularly great. Often has the writer of these sketches remarked, that she was a striking example of what solid sense, sterling integrity, and sincere piety will effect, without the advantages of refined education, great wealth, or even of that sex which usually claims the highest respect. It was his belief that for many years, her opinion had more influence in the large religious society to which she belonged, than that of any other individual in it. Yet it may be remarked with truth, and the truth is much to her honour, that she did not appear to know the influence that she possessed. She was truly diffident and unassuming, and never intruded her opinions upon others, nor delivered them as if she supposed they were important.

She possessed *great sensibility*, and *strong passions*, which caused her many a sore conflict. Yet the united influence of religion and good sense, had given her as a habit, a remarkable self-command; so that she was capable of managing, with a happy address, the most refractory spirits of others. She could remain self-possessed and silent, till the time for administering reproof was come, and then give it with the most complete effect. Many examples of this were known to her acquaintance.

Kindness and affability were distinguishing features of her character. They rendered her company unusual.

ly agreeable and pleasing; so that even the young and the gay sought it, and were often delighted with it. They could not but admire in her a strictness of piety, united with a tenderness, an attention, and a desire to give pleasure, which they seldom found. To the last she was visited by the young as well as by the old.

Her *benevolence* and *liberality* have already been mentioned. Many will feel their loss, and, ungrateful as the world is, many will long remember with gratitude the benefits she conferred.

She was remarkable for *sincerity*. There was nothing that she abhorred more than dissimulation or hypocrisy. She could not endure it in others, and she stood at the greatest distance from it herself. She loved to hear and to speak the truth in all its simplicity. On some occasions, the frankness and explicitness of her manner gave offence. Such instances, however, were not numerous; for though she would never speak what she did not believe, she was often silent, when she differed from the sentiments of others, and when she thought that speaking would do no good. But her silence on many such occasions was eloquent, for it was not easy for her countenance to conceal any sentiment that she strongly felt.

In *domestic life* she was indeed a *bright example*. Intent on doing good in this, which is the principal sphere of female usefulness, and having always a small family of her own, she brought up a number of orphan or destitute children, received several female boarders into her house,* and made it a charitable asylum to others who had once seen better days. Many of these, especially the youth, received the most essential benefit from her example, her conversation, her instruction, her admonitions, and her prayers. A domestic incident on which she loved to dwell was the

* *The last of these was the aged and amiable widow of the late Rev. Dr. Finley, whose company and conversation were the principal earthly solace of Mrs. Hodge in the last years of her life: And to whom the writer here begs leave to dedicate these memoirs of her dear departed friend.*

conversion and piety of a native African woman, whom her husband had purchased, and whom she had assiduously taught the principles of religion. This woman died at last in Christian faith and triumph, uttering, in broken English, sentiments that would have adorned the lips of the oldest and best instructed saint.

The piety of Mrs. Hodge was indeed *eminent*, but its peculiar characteristic was *humility*. Those who had heard much of her did not always find their expectations realized, when they became acquainted with her. They found that she was not one of those who anticipate continually and with confidence the heavenly joys, who are raised by this above all fear of death, and who seem to be rapped into a better world while they remain in this. A person who, from what he had heard of her, was led to believe that she possessed something of this character, after a short acquaintance, offered to present her with a handsome copy of Mrs. Rowe's *Devout Exercises of the Heart*. Her reply to him was this: "I know something of that book, Sir, and I thank you sincerely for offering it to me. But I must say that it is a book which does not suit me. I wish I was more like Mrs. Rowe than I am. But her exercises were so far superior to mine, and her descriptions of them are so strong, that, to tell you the truth, they rather discourage me than help me. If you please, let the book be given to Mrs. ——— I think it will exactly suit her." In this there was no affectation, to which indeed she was a stranger. She believed that others had made attainments far beyond her own, attainments which she wished to make, and mourned that she wanted; but to which, as she believed she did not possess them, she would make no pretensions. There were some considerable portions of her life, and many short seasons scattered through almost the whole of it, in which she rejoiced and triumphed in God her Saviour. But as a *habit* she did by no means possess the "full assurance of hope." On the contrary, she had frequent doubts and fears, and great anxiety about her spiritual state; though never, after her first exercises, did she sink into any thing like despon-

dency. She was often searching her heart, questioning and examining herself, to ascertain whether she was truly a disciple of Christ; and this continued to the very last. Few Christians have ever more fully renounced themselves than she, and expected salvation as the purchase of the Saviour, and the free gift of God through him. The idea of *human merit* in the sight of God was the abhorrence of her soul. Some of the poor, whom she relieved, would sometimes suggest that her abundant charities would render her the favourite of Heaven. Such intimations she always received with manifest disgust, and it is believed never failed to reprove the parties who gave them, and to endeavour to convey juster notions of the manner in which we must be recommended to God. She panted ardently after holiness and inward conformity to the divine law; but a clear sight and a deep sense of her remaining depravity made her abhor herself, and cleave to the

perfect righteousness of Christ, as the only foundation of her hope. Newton's Letters, and Owen on Indwelling Sin, were, next to the Holy Scriptures, the books which she most delighted to read.

Thus has an imperfect sketch been given of the character of this excellent woman, of whom a man, who had seen much of the world, was heard to say, as he followed her corpse to the grave, "I would rather be Mrs. Hodge than Bonaparte." Beyond all question, her life was more enviable, her death more happy, and her eternal destiny infinitely more desirable, than that of any unsanctified hero, patriot or sage, whose actions or whose wisdom have furnished the theme of the poet's song, the materials of the historian's volumes, and the objects of emulation to a blinded world. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

Poetry.

RELIGION.

AN OCCASIONAL HYMN.

THROUGH shades and solitudes profound,
The fainting traveller winds his way;
Bewildering meteors glare around,
And tempt his wandering feet astray:

Welcome, thrice welcome to his eye,
The sudden moon's inspiring light,
When forth she sallies thro' the sky,
The guardian angel of the night!

Thus mortals, blind and weak, below
Pursue the phantom, bliss, in vain;
The world's a wilderness of woe,
And life a pilgrimage of pain!

Till mild RELIGION, from above,
Descends, a sweet engaging form,
The messenger of heavenly love,
The bow of promise in a storm!

Then guilty passions wing their flight,
Sorrow, remorse, affliction cease;
RELIGION's yoke is soft and light,
And all her paths are paths of peace.

Ambition, pride, revenge, depart,
And folly flies her chastening rod;
She makes the humble, contrite heart,
A temple of the living God.

Beyond the narrow vale of time,
Where bright celestial ages roll,
To scenes eternal, scenes sublime,
She points the way and leads the soul.

At her approach the grave appears
The gate of paradise restor'd;
Her voice the watching cherub hears,
And drops his double-flaming sword.

Baptis'd with the renewing fire,
May we the crown of glory gain:
Rise, when the host of heaven expire,
And reign with God, forever reign.

Montgomery.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

T's "Observations on the account given in Rev. xx. 4—6, of the first and second resurrection, shall appear in our next number.

B's critical observations on several texts of Scripture, are approved, & on file.

A review of Mrs. Warren's History of the American Revolution, and of D. Mason's sermon, on Messiah's Reign; and also Memoirs of the late Rev. John Sergeant, father of the present missionary of that name, and of the Rev. John Moorhead, are received, and are intended for publication next month.

We thank our respected correspondent *Beta*, for the letters he has sent us, "from an aged clergyman, to a young student in divinity."

The attention of our readers, and particularly of magistrates and legislators, is invited to the piece on the execution of laws, which will well reward a careful perusal.

 TO THE PUBLIC.

AGREEABLY to an intimation in the Panoplist for October, the Editors of that work beg leave to state to their patrons in particular, and to the public in general, to whom they hold themselves responsible for the profits of their work, which are pledged to "charitable uses," that their success, notwithstanding many obstacles thrown in their way, has much surpassed their expectations; that the avails of the Panoplist have enabled them to discharge all its debts for the first year, though increased by various necessary expenditures, which will not occur in future; and that a balance remains for "charitable uses," the exact amount of which, for reasons following, has not yet been ascertained.

The Editors have experienced very considerable difficulties in closing their accounts for the first year, arising from unavoidable imperfection in their early arrangements, and the scattered and distant situation of many of the subscribers and agents, from some of whom arrearages are yet due. Most of these inconveniences, they think, will not occur again.

The profits already received, have been disposed of as follows:

To "the Evangelical Society" in Vermont, established to aid pious and ingenious young men, in indigence, to acquire education for the work of the gospel ministry,	\$100 00
To the Hampshire Missionary Society	108 00
To the Berkshire Missionary Society,	21 35

 229 35

Beside the above, there is at least an equal sum, for like charitable uses, in uncollected debts, and in the Numbers of the first volume of the Panoplist unsold, in the hands of the Editors and their agents. When the amount of this unestimated property shall be ascertained, it will be carried to the credit of the *charity fund*, at the close of this year, when the Editors intend to exhibit an official report under the hands of the Trustees. In the mean time, they offer their grateful acknowledgments to their numerous subscribers for their past encouragement; and as this work is not intended to enrich its Editors, but to enlighten the minds, and do good to the souls of their fellow-men, to explain and defend the doctrines, and to recommend the precepts of the gospel, and to collect a fund for the benefit of the poor, they confidently solicit continued patronage from the friends of evangelical truth.